THE WAY THEY PLAY

Samuel Applebaum &
Henry Roth

Book 5

Illustrated Discussions With Famous Artists and Teachers

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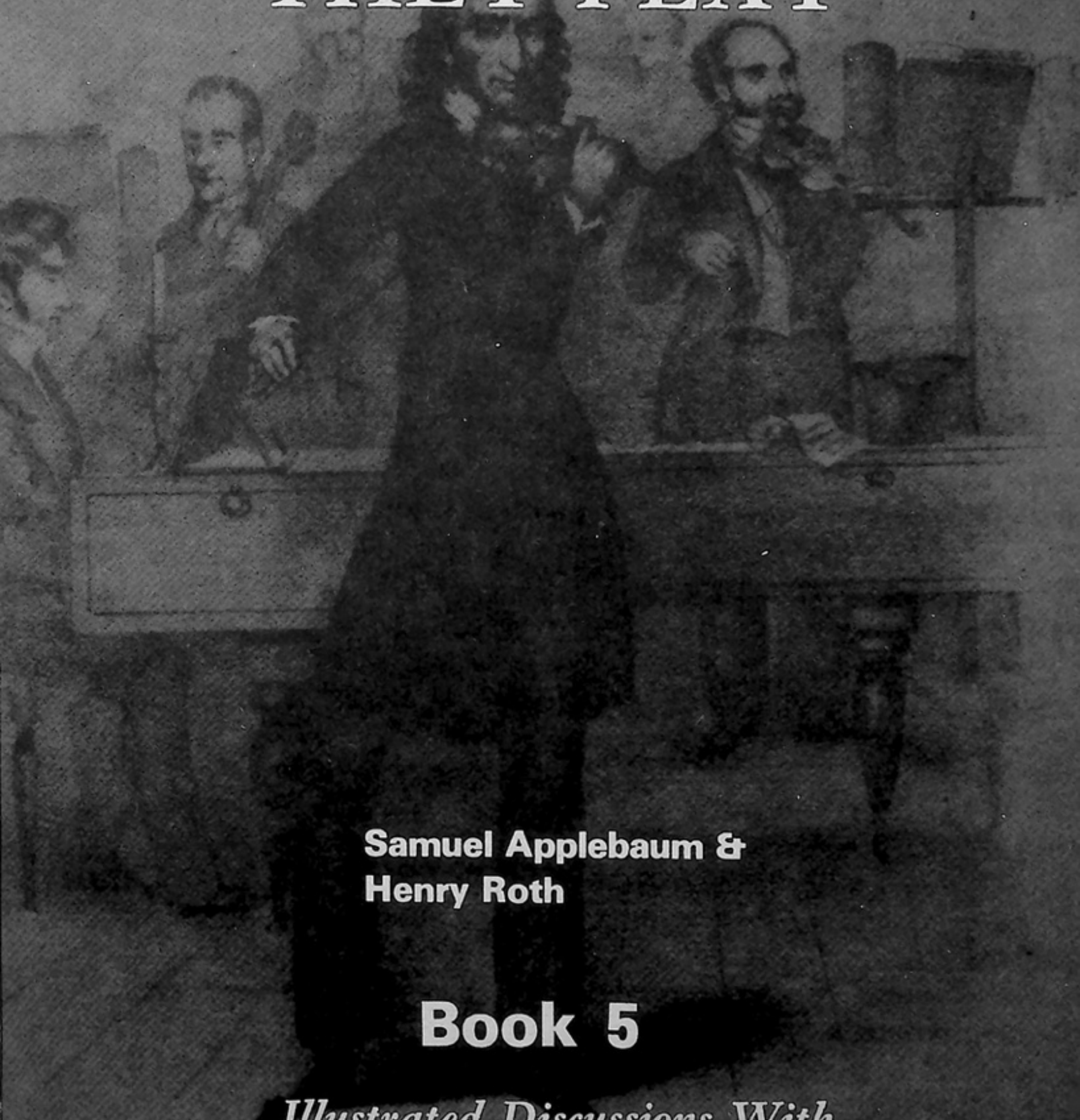

Samuel Applebaum &
Henry Roth

Book 5

*Illustrated Discussions With
Famous Artists and Teachers*

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Published by Paganiniana Publications, Inc.,
P.O. Box 27, Neptune, N.J. 07753

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Publisher's Foreword

Volume Five of *The Way They Play* series introduces a new co-author and a slightly altered format, one that will provide much informational data, provocative musical material and a great deal of reader enjoyment.

After the tragic accidental passing of Sada Applebaum, the Applebaum partnership that had initiated and sustained the series was no more. However, both Samuel Applebaum and the publisher were desirous of continuing the series which has become such a splendid contributor to the lore and annals of contemporary string playing.

Fortunately, the solution was close at hand in the person of Henry Roth, who had but recently distinguished himself with his "Critical Appreciation" of Jascha Heifetz, which appeared in the pictorial biography, *Heifetz,* a book which is rapidly enhancing its broad international circulation.

The writing of Henry Roth is uniquely attuned to the violinistic ethos. An active professional violinist, as well as a widely-published music critic and musicologist, he possesses a rare ability to sense and understand the thought processes and the instrumental and personal idiosyncrasies of string artists with an alacrity and sensitivity that is perhaps unsurpassed among those who are currently engaged in this area of musical endeavor.

This new collaboration of Samuel Applebaum and Henry Roth must, of course, differentiate, to some degree, the 'personality' of Volume Five from that of its predecessors. In addition, the authors have obtained, wherever possible, musical analyses of major string works from the artists, a signal addition to the reservoir of written string scholarship.

We trust and believe that our readers will be wholly amenable to the changes contained in Volume 5, and delighted with the collective results.

Erick Friedman

Erick Friedman was born August 16, 1939, in Newark, New Jersey. Neither of his parents was a professional musician, though his father, an amateur violinist, was instrumental in starting him on the violin. His first lessons were with Samuel Applebaum, with whom he studied from age six to 10. From 10 to 16 he was a pupil of Ivan Galamian, and towards the end of this period he also worked once or twice a month with Nathan Milstein when the celebrated virtuoso was in the area. His final studies were with Jascha Heifetz, with whom he began study at 17, for a period of between two and three years. Friedman's first public appearance was at the age of eight in a student recital at New York's Town Hall; at 14, as winner of the Music Education League Competition, he again appeared as soloist with the "Little Orch. Society of N.Y." In 1956, Friedman made his Carnegie Hall recital debut which launched his career as a major violin soloist. Since then he has recorded and been soloist with such noted American symphony orchestras as those of New York, Boston, Chicago, Detroit and Washington, to name but a few, and has been heard in recital and with orchestra throughout most of the world. In addition to his busy schedule as a touring virtuoso, Friedman teaches at the Manhattan School of Music, where he holds the Mischa Elman professorial chair, and frequently plays concerts of chamber music with a variety of colleagues. The violinist is unmarried.

The huge figure who strode through the doorway for our interview was one of the most physically imposing violinists we had ever seen or read about in violinistic annals. Six feet three inches tall, broad shouldered, with a 37-inch sleeve length, a full head of hair and a neatly trimmed beard, the 38-year-old Erick Friedman exudes a somewhat Lincolnesque image. He had scarcely settled in his chair when we bombarded him with one of those proverbial "64-dollar" questions.

"Of all the many, many elements involved in playing the violin well, Mr. Friedman, which single factor would you say is the most vital?"

The violinist smiled broadly. "That's really an armtwister, but speaking as a dedicated teacher—I have a class of 10-15 pupils—my answer, in a word, is relaxation," he emphasized. "I have found that too much tension is the underlying cause for much lack of success in many pupils. In fact, the more talented the student, the

Erick Friedman and the 'non-pareil', Jascha Heifetz, in May, 1961, during their recording sessions of the Bach "Concerto for Two Violins." Friedman was the only of Heifetz' students with whom Heifetz recorded. The two great artists developed a very close personal and professional relationship. Of course what is considered a "close relationship" for Heifetz has to be evaluated in terms of Heifetz' own definition. See page 239 (the Heifetz interview) in this book.

more often he is defeated by technical problems due to tension—-just trying too hard and not realizing that the more he presses both his left-hand fingers and bow, the less satisfactory results he will obtain."

"Tell us some of your own experiences as a young student, right from your first playing years. What prompted you to start the violin?"

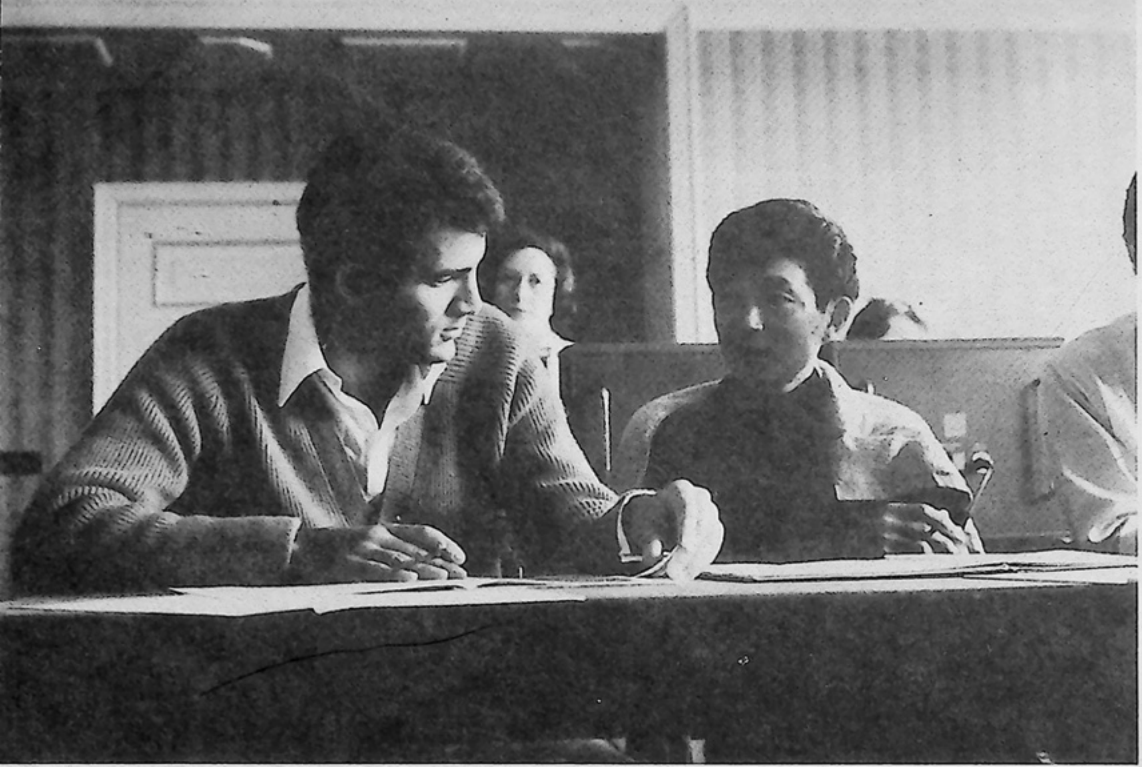
"As a 6-year-old, I remember being thrilled by listening to old Kreisler and Heifetz records. My father gave me a small violin which I began to play by ear. Then I started taking violin lessons with Samuel Applebaum. I went to school a half day and had a violin lesson daily. Before long, I was practicing about three hours a day. Applebaum instilled in me an understanding of the need for discipline and seriousness toward my instrument. My first public appearance was at 8, in a student recital, when I played Ellis Levy's 'Ghost Dance.' At 10, I went to study with Ivan Galamian privately. He taught me the principles of relaxation as I progressed technically, and how to develop proper habits of practice. Afterwards, I had begun to do some work with Nathan Milstein."

"Looking back, do you consider that you were a 'wunderkind'?"

Friedman made a wry grimace. "I suppose you might say that I was exploited to a certain extent as a prodigy, but I don't recall these peccadillos with much pleasure. In fact," he smiled, "the truth of the matter is—I played my first recital at 8, I was soloist with an orchestra at 10, and I really played my first note in tune at 15."

"Tell us some of your experiences with Milstein."

"As an impressionable youngster, I was tremendously stimulated by the exceptional vitality of Milstein's intellect. He yanked me out of the narrow aspects of pure violin playing. He would talk about painting, about international politics, about women, about life in general. This was a revelation to me. I badly needed to be freed from over-departmentalization. Milstein has an amazing type of talent and facility with his hands. He is perhaps in certain respects even more talented than Heifetz, but I believe that in the aggregate, Heifetz might be more violinistic in his understanding of the instrument. Milstein encouraged me to gain personal freedom, both violinistically and musically. You know,



Erick Friedman discusses the score of a work they will shortly perform with the famed conductor, Maestro Seiji Ozawa. On the facing page, Friedman is congratulated by the noted Italian movie star, Marcello Mastroianni after a very successful concert series during which Friedman captivated Italian audiences.

unlike Heifetz, he is very much against practicing scales. He is entirely his own man as a violinist, and while his way of playing is sometimes unorthodox, it is marvelously effective.

"He has unusual curiosity of mind and is always searching for new violinistic ideas. One of the most interesting things I have ever witnessed is Milstein playing Bach and accompanying himself like Paganini, filling in the missing chord harmonies with left hand pizzicatos. I saw Milstein only sporadically because of his concertizing. He dislikes travelling by plane, you know. When he was in New York, I would go to his home. We sometimes spent as much as four hours at a time together, and he did a great deal of playing for me. I must stress that I was incredibly fortunate in all the training I have had from my various teachers."

"Mr. Friedman, as the pupil of Heifetz, you had the opportunity to know him intimately. Can you tell us some of your experiences and personal observations of the man?"

"I would be happy to tell you a few things about Heifetz. Naturally, I cannot tell you everything in detail. That would take far longer than our interview time will permit.

"First of all—let me emphasize that as a violinist, I consider myself a disciple of Heifetz. I worked with him for the better part of three years, twice a week, and each lesson ran between two and three hours, though even then I was enjoying an active career under the 'Columbia Mat.' Don't ask me how long I practiced in those days, because I had long since stopped watching the clock. But I assure you I worked very hard, even with my concert commitments.

A youthful Erick Friedman seems none the worse for wear after appearing as soloist with Leopold Stokowski. Friedman has appeared as soloist with almost every major orchestra in the world.

"How was your practice time allotted?"

"I had no particular routine, but I estimate that I worked 30 to 45 minutes a day on scales. Heifetz is a martinet about scales, and I never knew just when he would demand a 'scale test', which was often. I believe that his attitude toward scales is predicated on the need to reduce his emotional tension. Inside, he is a seething volcano. He doesn't play scales to develop his facility, only to sustain it. He has all the facility he can possibly need. But playing scales puts him at ease, gives him an inner peace of mind, while at the same time strengthening his own self-discipline.

"Heifetz is a remarkably organized person and he is fanatically dedicated to perfection. Once he decides he will do something a certain way, he will never vary. This is evidenced in the similarity of his interpretation in those works he has recorded more than once. But make no mistake about it. Before Heifetz ultimately decides on doing something a certain way, he gives it a tremendous amount of thought and heart. Some say that he lacked spontaneity because of this supreme sense for organization that he has, but I say he was spontaneous of mind and inspired—in his practice room. He never practiced new ideas or experimented in public. That was his way.

"I recall my very first lesson with Heifetz. At that time, I was already concertizing and under management to Columbia, so I wasn't exactly a rank amateur. I was playing the Glazunov Concerto for him. He stopped me at the end of the first movement."

"What are you doing?" he said.

I tried to be diplomatic. "I suppose just about everything is wrong." I answered.

"No," Heifetz replied, "it wasn't that bad."

"I regarded this as sort of a back-handed compliment." Then he remarked, "There is something that you are doing and I wonder if you realize it. Did you ever take a look in the mirror at your face when you play? Do you know that you constantly have an expression of being emotionally moved? If you are moved, that's fine, but if you look like you are being moved all the time, you will look like a phony. No one can be moved all of the time. It is not humanly possible."

"It was my first real lesson in the profound importance of contrast in musical performance. I've never forgotten it."

We asked, "How do you feel about Heifetz as a teacher? Were you able to communicate easily with him? Aside from being associated with his great prestige, what did you actually learn?" Friedman paused for a moment of thought. Then he said, "You see, Heifetz is not one to spoonfeed his pupils. He expects the pupils to conform to his extraordinary standards and it is up to the pupil to make the best of the situation. Some pupils can profit from such a relationship. Others cannot. In my case, I was extremely lucky to be a strictly private pupil and have so much time to spend with him. In my opinion, Heifetz is the most phenomenal violinistic machine of all time—and I don't use the word "machine" in any derogatory sense. On the contrary, to be in such intimate proximity, to see Heifetz at work with his violin at my lessons, enabled me to learn things I could never have learned under any other conditions, or from anyone else. He taught me the value of total relaxation in combination with the kind of tension that makes for the ultimate in 'live' violin playing. From him, I learned how to achieve the maximum of effect from a minimum of effort. Watching Heifetz play as I did is the greatest education that any violin student can ever have, and I like to think I made the most of my inimitable opportunity.

"I learned to anticipate and understand Heifetz's violinistic and musical thinking processes, and how to analyze in my own right."

"Were your personal relations always smooth?" we asked.

"Naturally," said Friedman, "with a person of his self-assurance and authority, there were occasional moments of difficulty. I remember once when I lifted the stand up in Heifetz's studio to conform with my own height, he lowered it to the original height and said, 'It's fine for me.' However, this merely served to lend extra importance to something else I learned along the way, and that is, no violinist can tell another where and how to place his fingers and hands, exactly, or even how to set his music stand. One can only learn the principles of playing, analyze them and apply them to his own needs and physical requirements. This is the way I work with my own pupils.

"Let me add one final thought about the value of studying with Heifetz. It is my belief that most of the precepts of lesser teachers are, in one way or another, faulty, simply because there

Friedman and Herbert von Karajan rehearsing. Friedman appeared as soloist with the Berlin Orchestra.

Taken with available light from the audience by Dr. Axelrod, these photos (see also the facing page) show Friedman during a performance of the Tchaikovsky "Violin Concerto" with the New Jersey orchestra.

seems to be some inverse proportion to talent and dogmatic intransigence; that is to say, rather humorously, that the less one is able to do something the more one is convinced about how to do it. This I suppose is human nature. After all, Heifetz is the man who can do it all violinistically—not merely theorize about doing it, and when a student is confronted over a period of time with the Heifetz perfection, that student must learn many things if he has any brains and talent at all. Ironically, Heifetz himself is not at all intransigent."

"Did Heifetz aid you in obtaining a concert career?"

"No, not directly, but he did give me a great deal of helpful advice on contracts that were offered to me, and pointed out certain pitfalls for me to avoid. And when he invited me to record the Bach "Double Concerto" with him, it doubtlessly enchanced my own reputation and prestige. I must say no other violinist has ever recorded with him on an equal footing.

"And while I am still speaking of people who influenced my musical education, I must mention the pianist Eugene Istomin. He contributed much to broadening my musical horizons through playing chamber music together, and imbued me with a deeper musical seriousness of purpose."

"Do you incorporate those things you learned from Heifetz in your own teaching?"

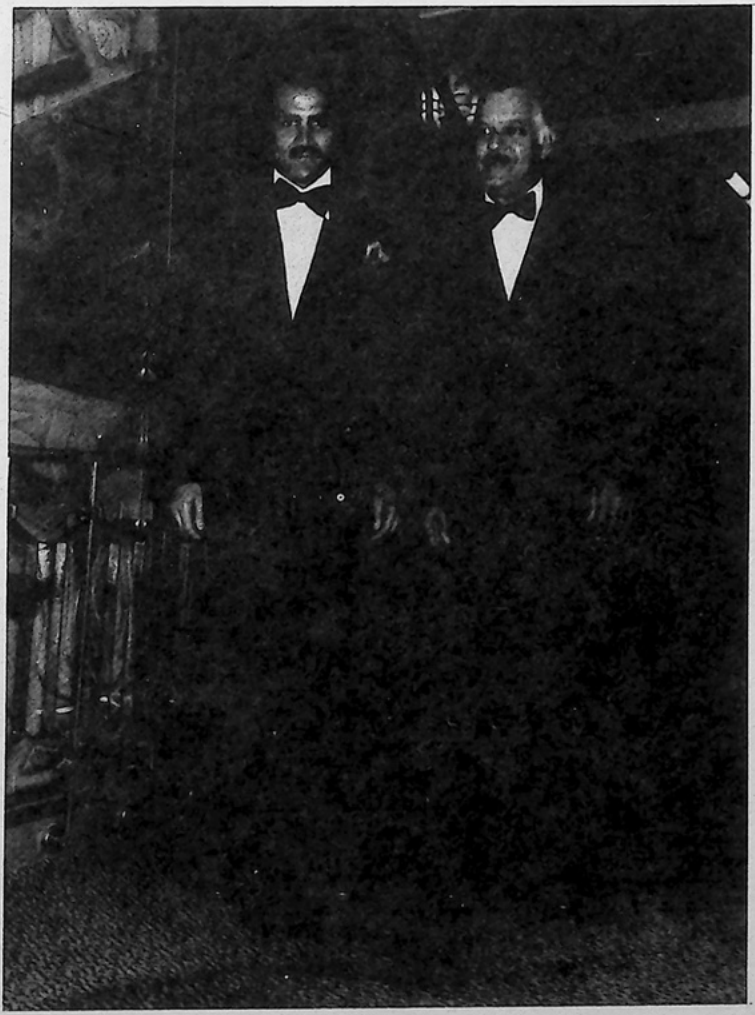
"I certainly do. And I greatly value the teaching and violinistic principles that were expounded and written about by Leopold Auer."

"Can we hear some more of your views on teaching?"

"Well, let me say that I feel teaching is a very important part of my career, and I am very attached to my own students. Moreover, I think it is our responsibility to pass on to the upcoming generation the violinistic lore and traditions we have imbibed. Teaching helps me to verbalize my own ideas about playing, and I myself sometimes learn from students what *not* to do.

"I consider that violin playing is a very eclectic art. There is no single 'right' way to do anything on the violin. For instance, too much mechanical analysis can actually be harmful. If I demand that a pupil use his fingers and wrist just as I do and he does not have my musculature, reflexes, length and breadth of fingers, etc., that pupil cannot be expected to respond successfully. There must be moderation in guidance, I believe, insofar as principles must be stressed, not merely directions on how to play. Every school of violin playing has many valid ideas. Again, Heifetz himself never said one single word as to how to hold the violin or bow other than mention that though I do it differently, 'it works'.

Friedman with the celebrated pianist, Jorge Bolet.



"What difficulties have you encountered in teaching?"

"I find teaching to have certain paradoxical aspects. It is not at all difficult, for example, to teach a gifted youngster to play well. Most of them are as imitative as monkeys. They listen to records, go to concerts, observe keenly. What is much more difficult is to teach them to play well in public, as soloists, and even more so, to teach them to continue playing well over a period of years.

"You see—it is necessary to remember that to a great extent we are dealing with organic 'rubber bands,' speaking in the purely technical sense, of course. Muscles, tendons and nerve impulses are all subject to fallibility and the inexorable law of attrition to which we are all accountable over a period of long years. That is why I am vehemently opposed to any finger or arm movements that are not absolutely natural. So many players, in an attempt to make ephemeral technical advances, stretch their muscles and ten-

Friedman, a popular bachelor, poses with Dr. Applebaum's daughter Lois (left), Adele Young and Christine Walevska.

Friedman awaiting his cue to "come in", reflects a stern, no-nonsense approach to music. The "Heifetz" in him is very apparent.

dons out of shape, deaden their reflexes by squeezing their fingers to a pulp against the fingerboard, and abuse their hands in one way or another."

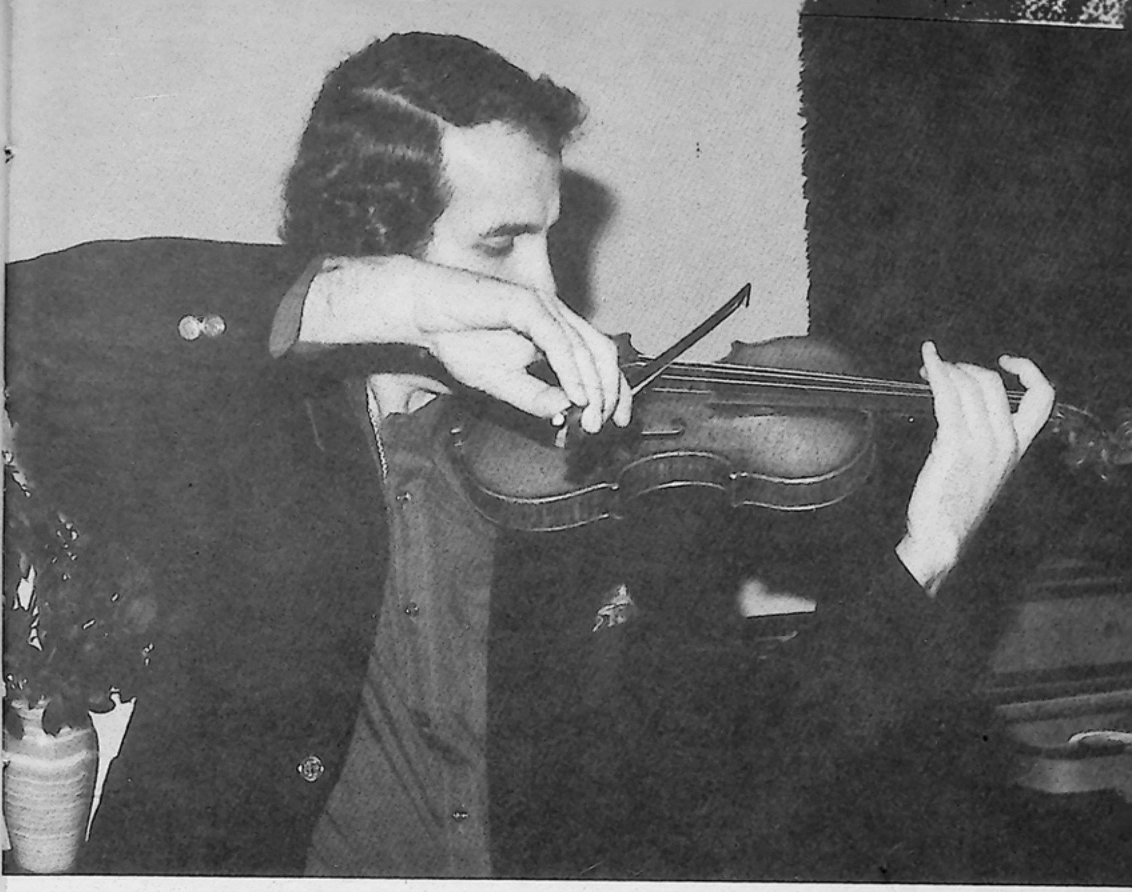
"Can you give us a specific example of this?"

"Yes. Let us take the vibrato. One can easily experiment by putting the fingers on a table and trying to vibrate them. As soon as the fingers are squeezed, they go more slowly; as soon as they are relaxed they vibrate freely again.

"I feel that Heifetz has inadvertantly done some damage to other instrumentalists who attempt to emulate him. They are under the mistaken idea that he gets his great tonal intensity by pressing. Actually, his hands are as relaxed as a ballerina in flight. I always felt that if I got too close to him and breathed heavily, I would blow the violin and bow right out of his hands; that's how loosely he holds his instruments. Milstein, too, was utterly relaxed.

"Getting back to the vibrato—the vibrato is essentially a 'wiggle' of the finger. There must not be too much finger pressure or

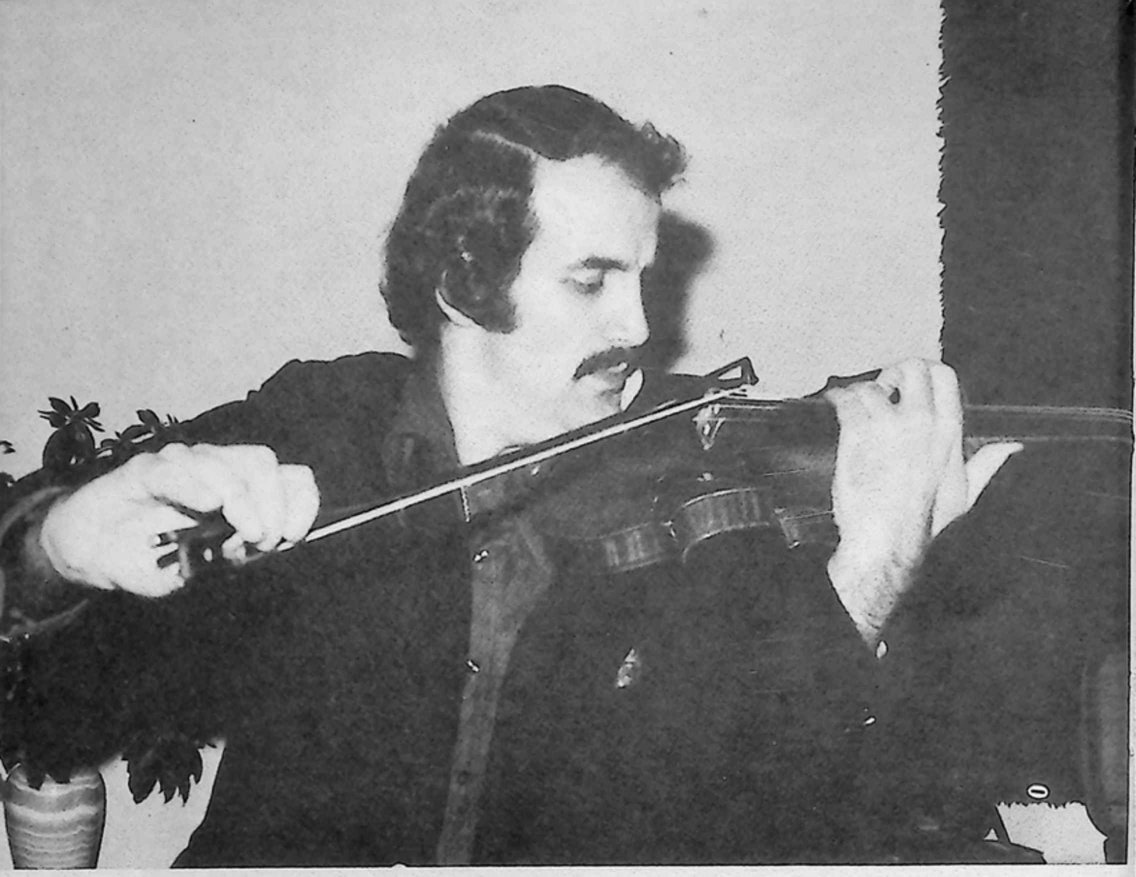
With the "cream" of the New York (violin) education scene. The great professors of the violin now include (from right to left) Friedman, Bronstein, Dorothy DeLay, Applebaum and Kopec.



Friedman, with his bow hair laying flat on the string, prepares to dig into a sonorous up-bow.

forcing. There is always a tendency that when a violinist becomes more intense emotionally, either instinctively or intellectually, he will press or squeeze, and he must resist this temptation by relaxing muscular tension. Only then can his vibrato function properly. Of course, the player must learn to center his finger on the string correctly and adhere to the very core of the note. Let me point out once again that the muscles of a violinist are like the vocal cords of a singer. If they are over-strained, elongated or abused in any way, they become as useless as overstretched rubber bands.

"Another habit seems to have come into vogue in recent years to which I object, and that is what I call 'the late vibrato.' This occurs when the player first puts his finger on the note and then, after an interval, starts to vibrate. Intrinsically, this gives every note the feeling of being a phrase in itself. This habit is widespread among 'pop' singers. Today, many violinists indulge in this type of



As a violinist gets older, his right arm is the first sign of weakness, especially as he plays a long note on one bow and reaches the tip of the down-bow legato. Friedman possesses unusual skill in his bowing.

tone production. It emanates from the influence of the gypsy concept of sound. There are times when this can be quite effective, but when it becomes a 'musical way of life,' I don't like it. I admire those musicians who conceive phrases in their skeletal form, link each phrase to the other so that an integral musical whole is achieved."

"What are some of the basic problems encountered by students in learning control of the bow?"

"Again we run into the pressing and squeezing syndrome with the bow, as well as the left hand. In fact, there is a strong muscular association between the hands. When the left hand muscles are over-pressed and squeezed, the right hand tends to react in the same way, and vice-versa."

"How, then, can this undue tension be overcome?"

"There is only one way—the easiest way in the world. What is the cure for insomnia? Sleep. What is the cure for tension? Relaxation! this may seem like over-simplification, but it is the only answer. If your shoe pinches, you must take it off!"

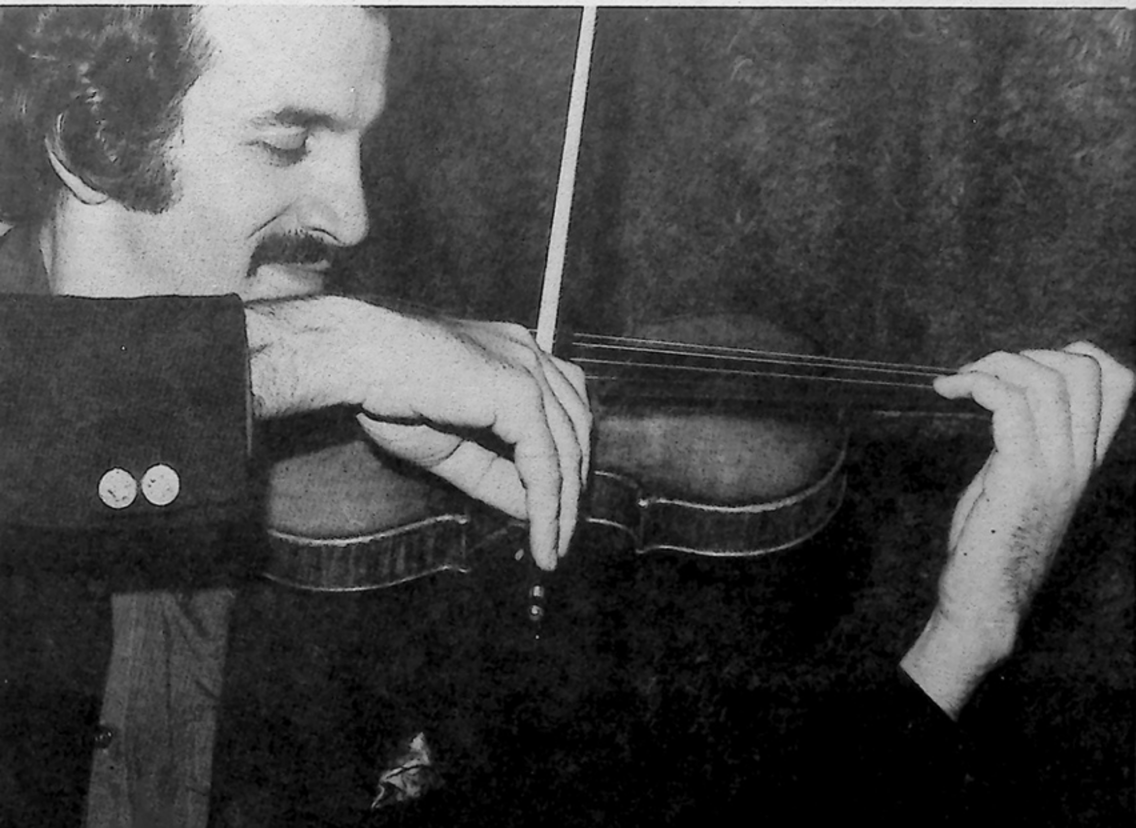
"What about nervousness related to playing in public?"

"Again, it all comes back to the question of muscular relaxation. I remember when I was studying with Heifetz. Sometimes as he played passages for me, for some reason he would appear to be nervous. His face would flush and he was obviously in the grip of inner anxiety. But he always played perfectly because his muscles were so relaxed and controlled that they could surmount any psychological discomfiture."

"Do you have any problems in communicating with your pupils?"

"There are always problems of this kind. Sometimes, I throw a quiz at my class. I explain something very carefully and ask the pupils to write down what I just said as exactly as they can. It is

Asked to pose for the "perfect" hand positions for a down-bow in the first position, he smiled, and broke out into laughter when Applebaum reminded him of his early lessons!



surprising—often their reports are not only different, one from the other, but actually in opposition. I find that mere usage of words at a lesson is not an easy form of communication."

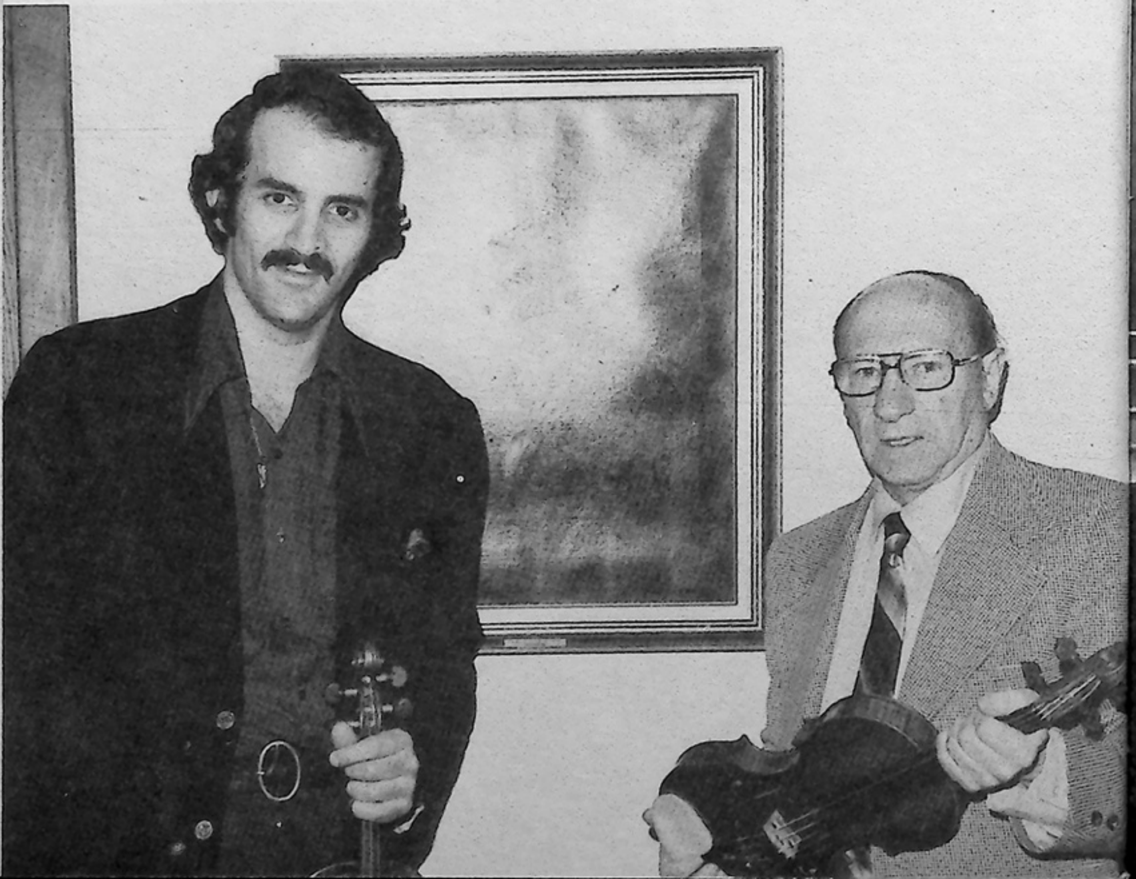
"What is your opinion about the use of the left thumb, which, as you know, is often the subject of contention?"

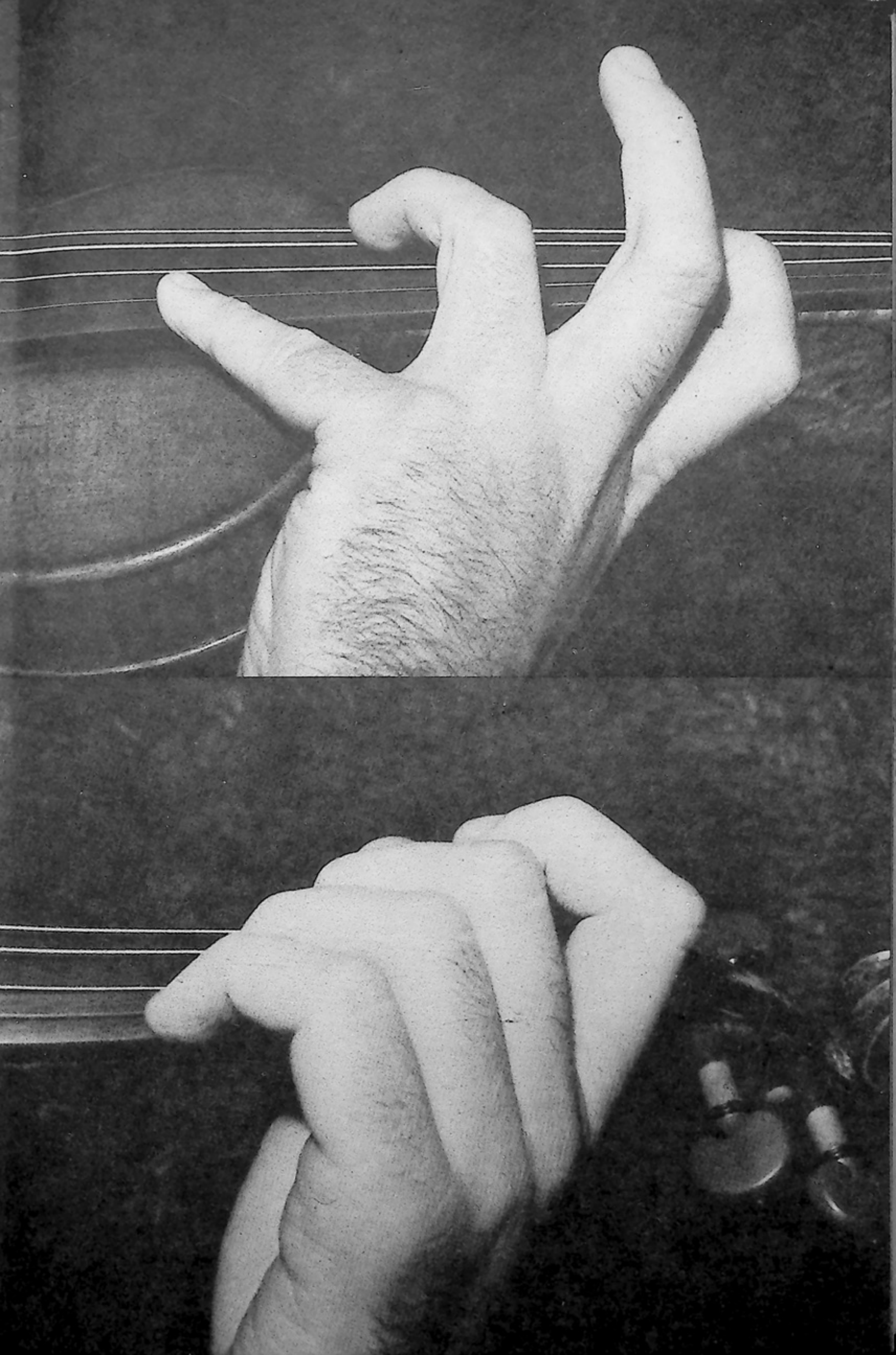
"The left-hand thumb is very important. During the pressure of performance it often causes trouble. The thumb must be used only as a gentle *support*, rarely as a *guide* to direct the fingers. And it should neither 'drag' nor measure. The thumb must be considered as merely an appendage, never a dominating digit . . . always in a natural position."

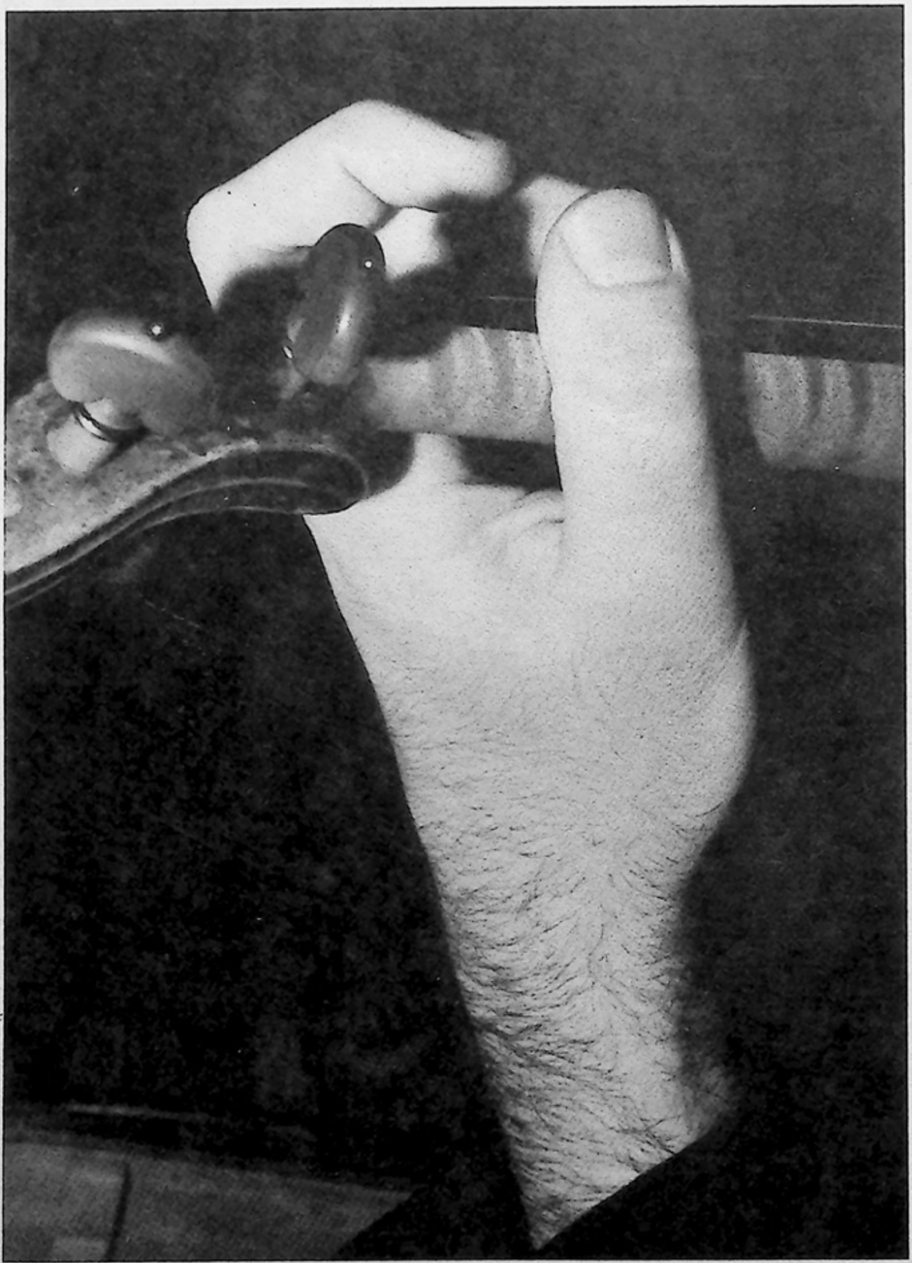
"What do you practice for your daily technical regimen?"

"I always practice scales, slowly, even just before a performance. And I concentrate on exercises in thirds, sixths, tenths, and fingered octaves; also on arpeggios, with a variety of fingerings. I watch my intonation like the proverbial hawk. For bowing, I make

Friedman and Applebaum play together again! On the facing page Friedman shows the ease with which he plays 10ths (upper photo) and the half position (below).







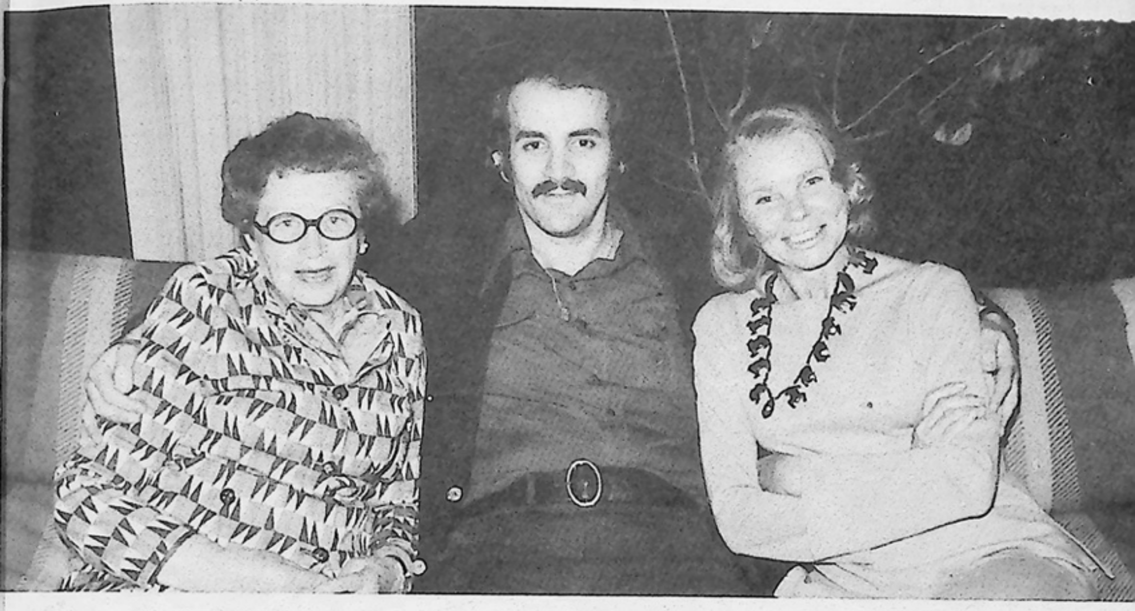
"The thumb must be used only as a gentle support, rarely as a guide to direct the fingers." On the facing page, Friedman makes a point for relaxing while playing.

certain to include up- and down-bow staccato. You might be interested to know that I do some shadow boxing to help promote general muscular relaxation. I consider that the principles of violin technique can be likened to those of athletic sports. There must be no wasted motion instrumentally. This *allows* for body motion that is *musically* not wasted."

"If you do not use the thumb as a guide, what do you use?"

"I believe that the violin fingerboard was designed so that the left palm can direct the hand. In my studies with Heifetz and Milstein, I noticed that they both make assiduous use of the palm, in contact with the violin. When the teachers tell the pupils never to use the palm in contact with the violin, they deprive them of a valuable guidance factor in negotiating the length and breadth of the fingerboard.

Examining a pair of rare Guarnerius del Gesu violins before they play duets together. Applebaum was Friedman's early teacher.



Sada Applebaum, Erick Friedman and Evelyn Axelrod.

"Mr. Friedman, you have a beautiful trill. Would you please comment on how such a trill can be developed?"

"Thank you for the compliment. In regard to the trill, I once read a statement by Leopold Auer in which he asserted that he could recognize the degree of a violinist's talent by his ability to play trills. I like to carry this one step further. I feel that I can recognize talent by a violinist's ability to *understand* trills, not necessarily play them. You see, some people have problems with trills only because they have been improperly trained. The way I conceive it, the trill is merely a finger flutter, and its success or failure depends—yes—on the player's penchant for relaxation. Many string students play a sort of vibrato to simulate a false trill, or try to move the finger with strength, which produces a slow trill, and that is like having no trill at all. When the stationary finger in a trill is anchored, firmly but not too pressed, and the thumb and hand are relaxed, it is easy to flutter. Remember, the trilling finger itself should be used lightly, to induce rapidity."

"We must ask you this. Some violinists are handicapped by small hands. Even Sarasate avoided the works of Paganini because of the comparative smallness of his hands. You, on the contrary, have hands of exceptional size and extra long arms. Has this caused you any technical difficulties?"

Al Nissim, President of the Musical Heritage Society with Erick Friedman. Friedman records for MHS, amongst other labels.

"Yes, it has. For instance, I don't find it easy to play scales. However, I learned to overcome any disadvantages in this regard during my teens. I found that shifting the violin to my left, rather than holding it straight out in front, helped me a great deal."

"How would you advise a student to develop speed of passagework?"

"Well—assuming that the pupil already plays with true intonation, I would suggest that he concentrate on evenness of passagework. While it is true that speed in itself has a direct connection with the metronome, the semblance of speed can be greatly enhanced in passagework that is absolutely exact in proportion. Players who understand this principle produce passagework that actually sounds faster than it is being played."

"How do you view the relationship between soloist and conductor?"

Friedman laughed. "Let us say there should be a symbiosis between the two, if humanly possible. My definition of symbiosis is—the intimate co-existence of two dissimilar organisms in a mutually beneficial relationship. I admit this does not always occur as often as I'd like."

Friedman with Esther and Henry Roth.

Mr. Friedman had made his point. We asked him, as a noted soloist, to comment on chamber music.

"I think it is most important that a soloist play chamber music. Many of the greatest works for strings are in the metier. We know that purely pyrotechnical playing involves a certain amount of exhibitionism, whereas chamber ensemble works are dedicated to sheer music. Soloists do not always play chamber music as well as they should, often due to the individualistic ego factor. I myself am almost fanatically devoted to chamber music, and I always try to perform it in terms of equally balanced ensemble.

"We understand that you have recently recorded the Bartok Concerto No. 2. How do you approach this type of music?"

"Just answering briefly, I recall what my friend the pianist Gyorgy Sandor advised. He is a noted Bartok player, you know. He said, think of Bartok as you think of Mozart—in pure classical lines."

We were nearing the end of the time allotted for our interview. For our final question, we asked, "Can you tell us some humorous anecdote that occurred during your many travels as a touring soloist?"

Friedman reflected a moment. "Yes," he replied. "I think perhaps the drollest incident took place at the old Idlewild Airport when I was returning home from London after having recorded the Bach 'Double Concerto' with Heifetz. I was carrying my violin and a briefcase full of photographs of the recording session which Heifetz had ordered at his own expense.

"The customs agent looked me over. I was quite young and had a lot of hair.

"He said, 'I see you've got a violin there, Sonny. Does it belong to you?'

"I gave him the entire pedigree of my instruments."

"He looked me over suspiciously. 'Where did you get a Stradivarius violin? Can you prove it's yours?'

"I explained that I was a concert violinist and had just finished a recording with Jascha Heifetz.

'Who's Jascha Heifetz?' he demanded.

"Then I showed him the photographs of the recording session with Heifetz and me. He looked them over carefully and then, suspicions allayed, he looked up at me and without a single word of comment on what I had shown him, asked 'What do you think of Yehudi Menuhin?' "

……

At 38, Erick Friedman's career seems to be again on the wing. In the concert season immediately preceding this writing, he presented, at Carnegie Hall, a two-evening series of six great romantic violin concertos—Brahms, Sibelius, Tchaikovsky, Lalo, Vieuxtemps No. 5 and Wieniawski No. 2, with the American Symphony Orchestra under conductors Izler Solomon and Arthur Winograd. His touring schedule is burgeoning both here and in Europe. Friedman plays on the marvelous Guarnerius del Gesu once owned by Zlatko Balakovic, and his collection of great bows include two by Tourte and a Pecatte. He is also a fine violist and adept at the piano. He has a trio with which he performs for about 3 weeks out of the season, the other members being Emmanuel Vardi, viola and Jascha Silverstein, cello. 'Musical Heritage' records has released all of this group's Beethoven String Trios.

The Friedman cultural interests are quite diversified, and several years ago he took a sabbatical holiday from the violin to study Greek, French, English literature, calculus and physics at Princeton. In 1965 he was a judge at the Jacques Thibaud Competition, the contest in which Vladimir Spivakov, whose career is also currently arousing international acclaim, was awarded only fourth prize. (So much for the 'eternal verities'of competition ratings!)

Friedman's sound and style reflect profoundly 20th century romanticism in its most extreme violinistic personification. As a proclaimed disciple of Heifetz, it is no exaggeration to state that Friedman epitomizes the Heifetz violinistic and interprative syndrome as positively as does Igor Oistrakh that of David Oistrakh—if not more so. In listening to the recordings of Friedman, one is constantly startled by his emulative mastery of the arch, intensely individualistic Heifetz-ian slides, position changes and expressive moves, while at the same time realizing that Heifetz himself is not the performer. And equally striking is the fact that Friedman's digital commitment to the core of the note and his vibrato, together with the friction of his bowing strokes, produce a timbre of ravishing soprano tone more closely approximating that of Heifetz than does any other violinist. His attack, articulation,

Dr. Herbert Axelrod, Judy Adams (Miss Oklahoma) and Erick Friedman doing the Bach "Double." Erick played the piano part.

"Wait!" It wasn't done correctly, so Friedman stops the music and demonstrates how it should be done, in a very noble manner!

fingerings, bowings, tempos and phrasing also equate with his master's example. The Heifetz influence on Friedman has been indelible—at least as vested in Friedman's recordings made during his mid-twenties.

One should not, of course, render definitive and final judgement of an artist on the basis of recordings alone. All too many auditors have been taught this lesson, often to their chagrin. But the body of Friedman's RCA recordings, made just prior to the mid-1960's, represents an extraordinary display of suave illustrious virtuosity that must certainly impress, if not overwhelm, any violin 'aficiondo' of romanticist persuasion. One may decry the similarity of the Friedman muse to that of Heifetz, and wish that Friedman's own musical personality were considerably less closely juxtaposed to that of his mighty mentor. But insofar as ear titillation and sheer enjoyment of brilliant violin playing are concerned, the Friedman exhibition is spectacular.

The Friedman tempi and pace are invariably geared to speed, but his technical equipment is fully adequate to handle whatever challenges he chooses to impose upon himself.

Among his most impressive discs is the Tchaikovsky Concerto. As an entity it is a glittering, exciting performance. His Mendelssohn Concerto is immaculately polished and sleekly warm. The finale pace is reasonable, with supra-crisp spiccatos, and the beginning of the last page, which is sometimes sloppily executed, even by fine violinists, has the awkward G-string descension crackling impeccably. (Both are with Ozawa and the London Symphony.

Friedman's Paganini Concerto No. 1 is played with an admirable awareness of style and dazzling bravura digital facility, frequently embellished with flashing staccato passages of biting incision. The cadenza, written by Friedman, is well-constructed and, as to be expected, extremely difficult. The second movement is properly operatic, theatrical in concept. The finale is played with less audacity than the first movement; the double harmonics are a bit reticent (though the single harmonics sing beautifully).

All spiccatos and staccatos are unusually crisp. In all, it ranks with the better Paganini discings (with Hendl and the Chicago Symphony). Two Paganini Caprices find No. 17 opening with a slashing attack, the runs spun off glossily, the middle octaves a bit stiff; No. 21 is somewhat slow in the melodic sixths, tending to lose propulsion, while the staccato section is explosively dynamic.

Sarasate's "Zigeunerweisen" has optimum richness of sound and intensity, with the middle 'gypsy' melody singing with rare piquance; the dashing finale scintillates. Friedman's Saint-Saens "Havanaise" is suave and smooth, like that of Heifetz, a superbly appealing performance. His Chausson "Poeme," starting off on the G-string a-la-Heifetz, is muscular, juicy, and occasionally poetic; his Ravel "Tzigane" offers lushly vibrant G-string sound, is 'stiff-ish' in the few melodic octaves, yet is indeed a formidable "Tzigane." Accompaniments by Sargent and the London Symphony are aggressive and expansive though overbearing on occasion. Perhaps the fault is in the engineering.

Two stints with pianist André Previn feature the Franck Sonata, (beautiful in sound, alert to dynamic contrasts) and the Debussy Sonata, (smartly gleaming and nicely fluent). Previn's pianism is carefully considered and neatly integrated, though somewhat monochromatic in sound.

Twelve short numbers with pianist Brooks Smith are highlighted by Friedman's heaven-storming ariosity in Szymanowski's "Romance," the eruptive spiccatos in the Rimsky-Korsakov-Heifetz "Flight of the Bumblebee," and the velvet sophistication (if somewhat unorthodox) in the Mozart "Rondo in C," rounding out a vignette disc of superior edification.

It is illuminating to hear Friedman's recorded performance of Bartok's Concerto No. 2, made some dozen years after the aforementioned discs (with Zdenek Macal, Orchestra of Radio Südwestfunk, scheduled for release by Connoisseur Records). This is a work that Heifetz did not choose to perform in public, thus it has no authentic Heifetz interpretation that could possibly influence Friedman or any other violinist.

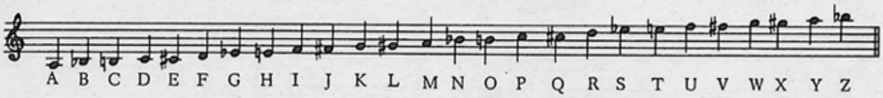
In this disc we hear the mature Friedman totally on his own. The concerto is delivered with brilliant virtuosity. Though it would be untrue to intimate that the Heifetz influence of Friedman is no longer evident on the level of instrumental manipulation and sound, it is immediately clear that Friedman has sincerely sought to develop a personal interpretation. In purely lyric passages he diversifies his vibrato, sometimes patently and intentionally "cooling off" his sound (though he never indulges in the meaningless "hot and cold" vibrato usage that merely sabatoges the melodic flow, as do some other modern solo violinists). The result is a performance that is aggressive and incisive yet flecked with pensiveness; warm blooded, occasionally hard-edged, but admirably viable and interesting.

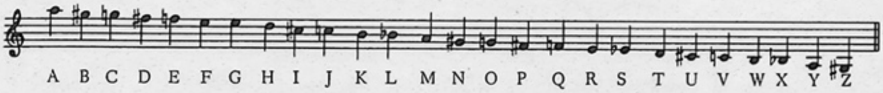
If Erick Friedman continues his career with the violinistic authority manifested in these recordings, he must certainly be considered the ranking heir to the Auer-Heifetz legacy and an artist of uncommon eminence.

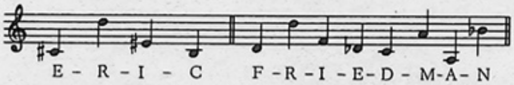
Friedman with the authors, Applebaum and Roth.

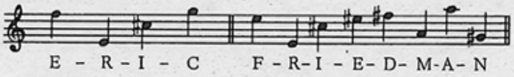
VALSE-BLUETTE

(or the name of Eric Friedman) for Violin and Piano
("Greeting Cards - opus 170 #24)

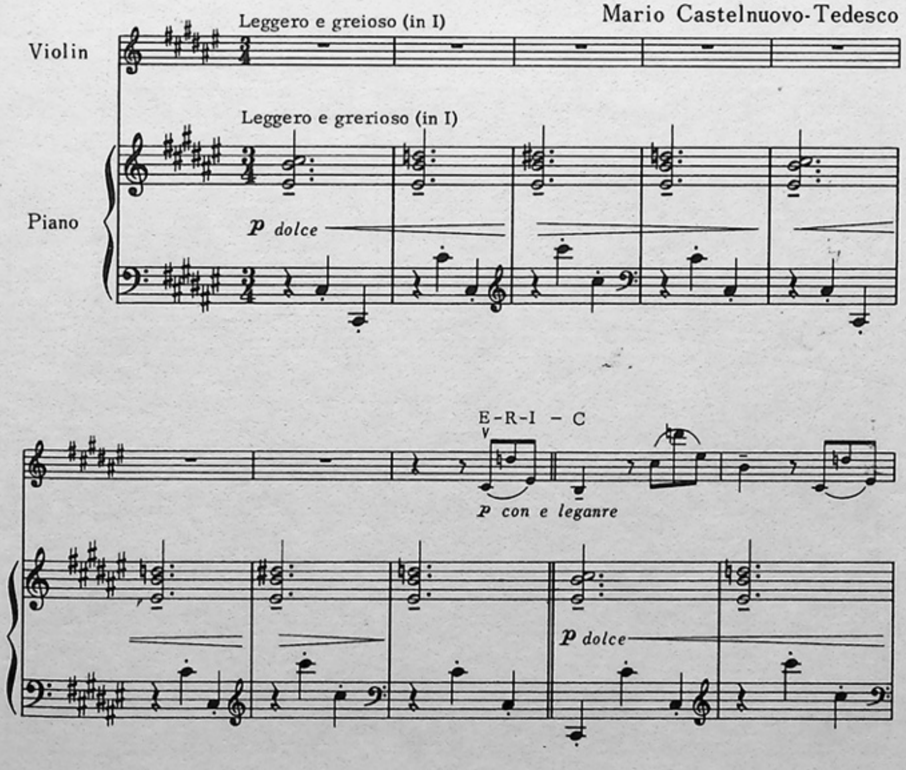


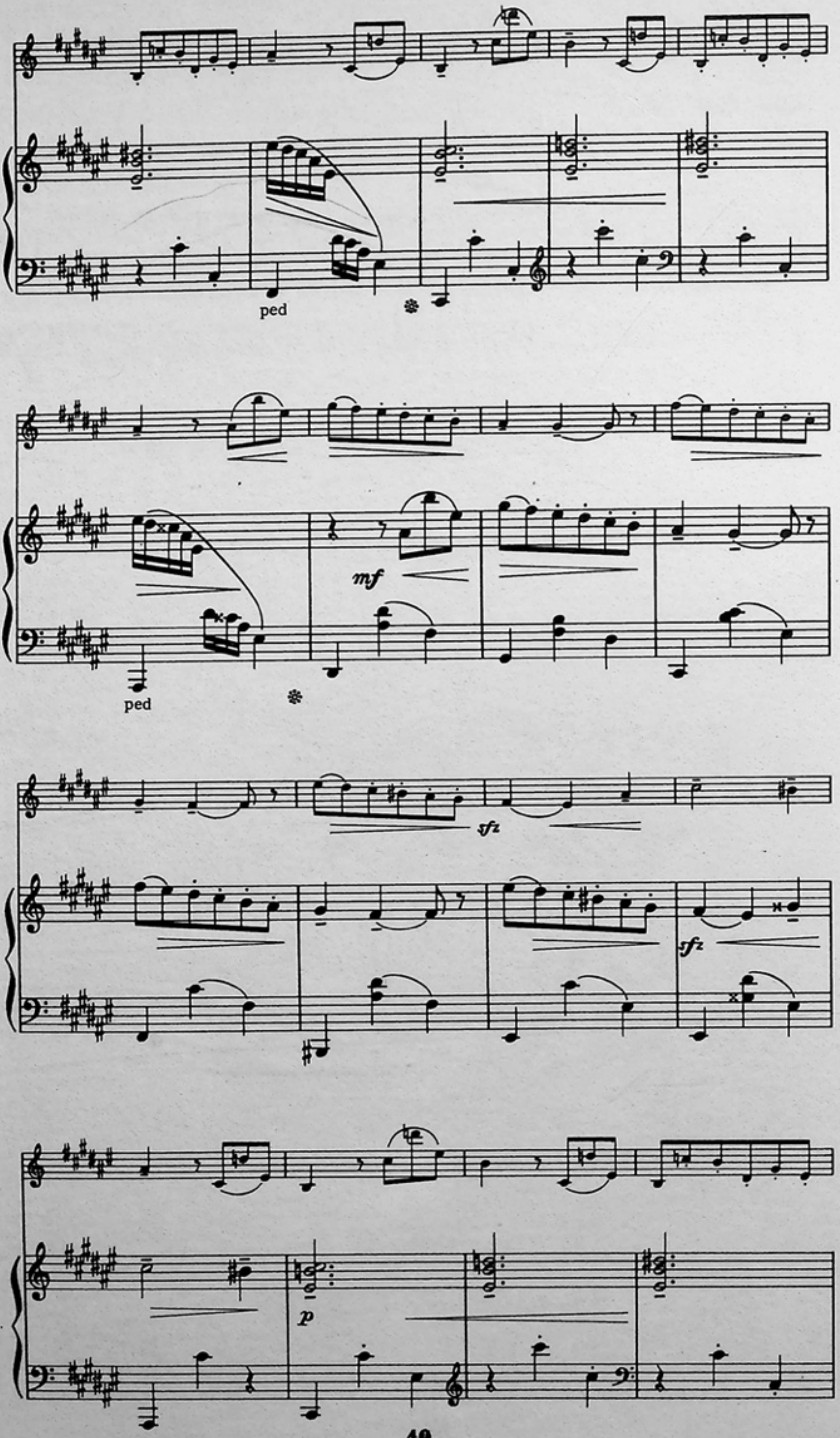






Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco

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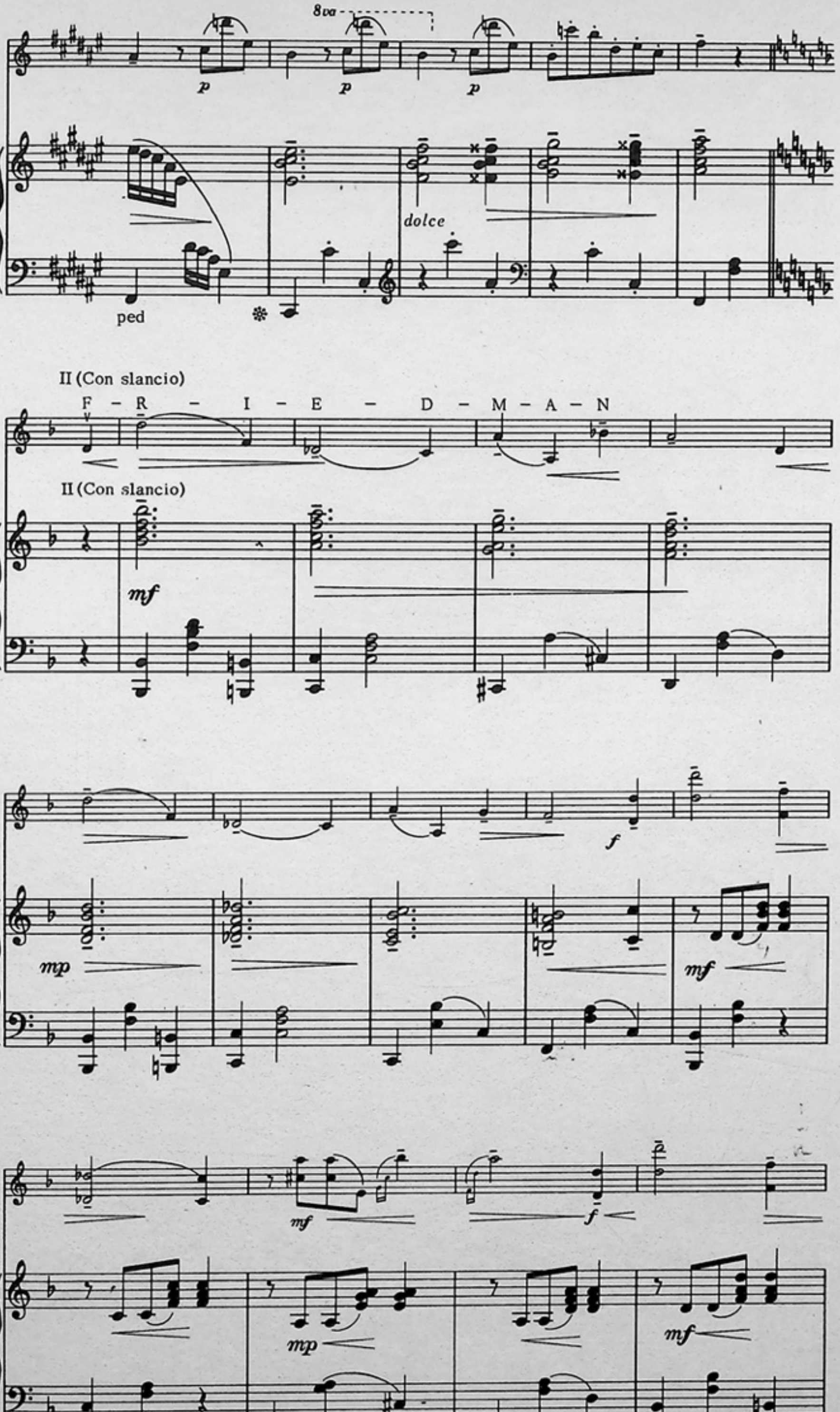
8va
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II (Con slancio)
F – R – I – E – D – M – A – N
II (Con slancio)
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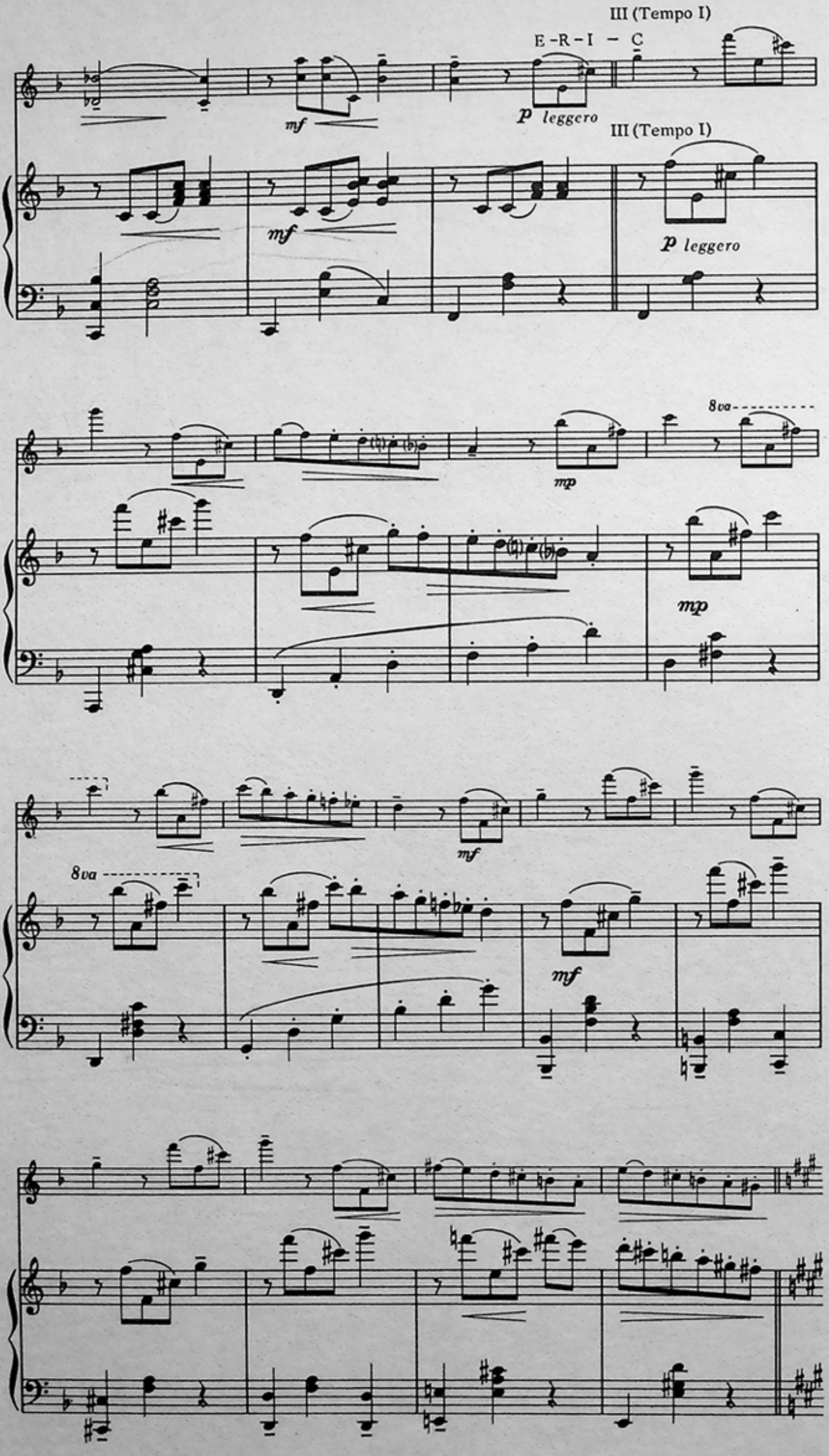
III (Tempo I)
E-R-I-C
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p leggero
III (Tempo I)
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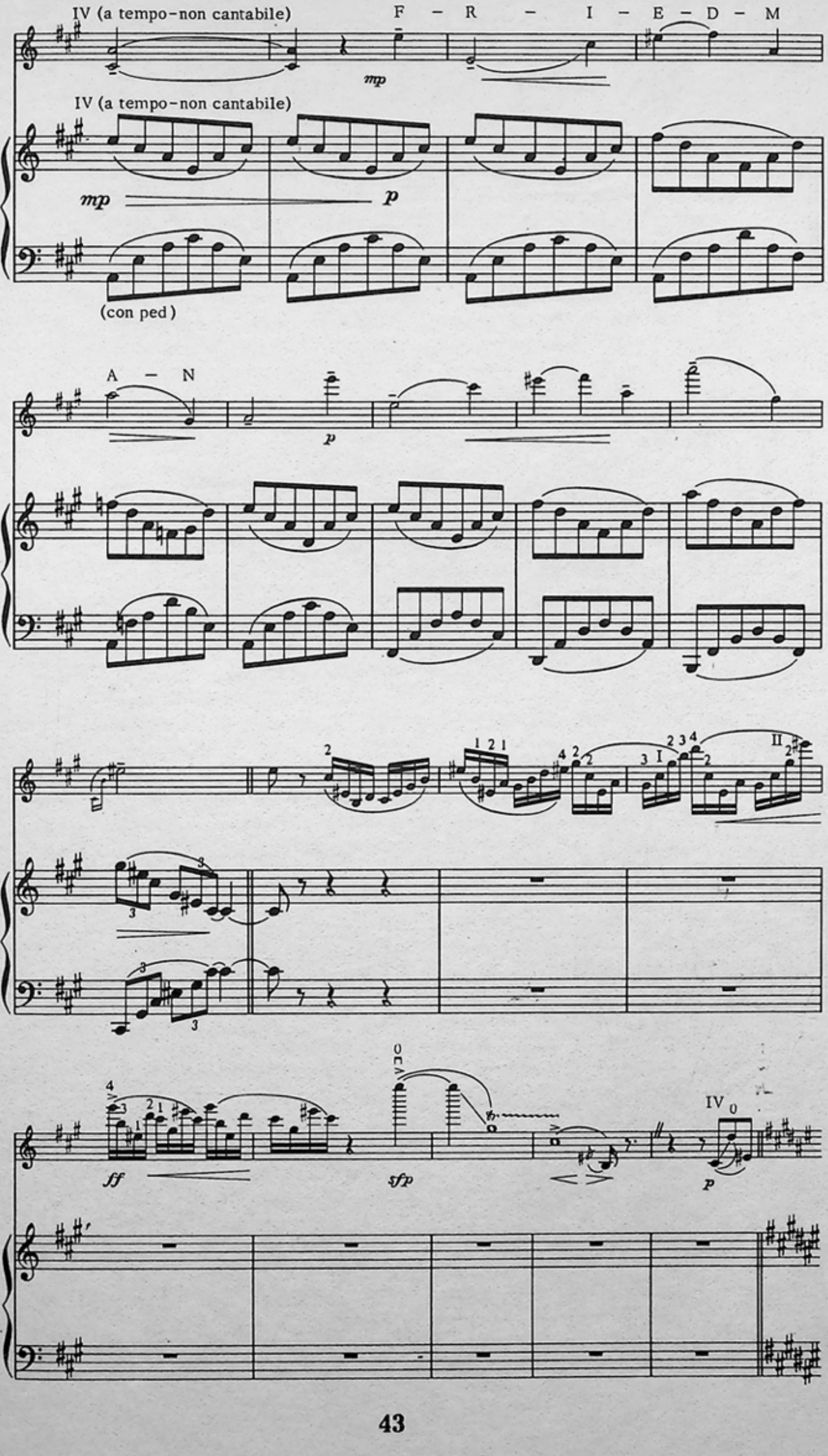
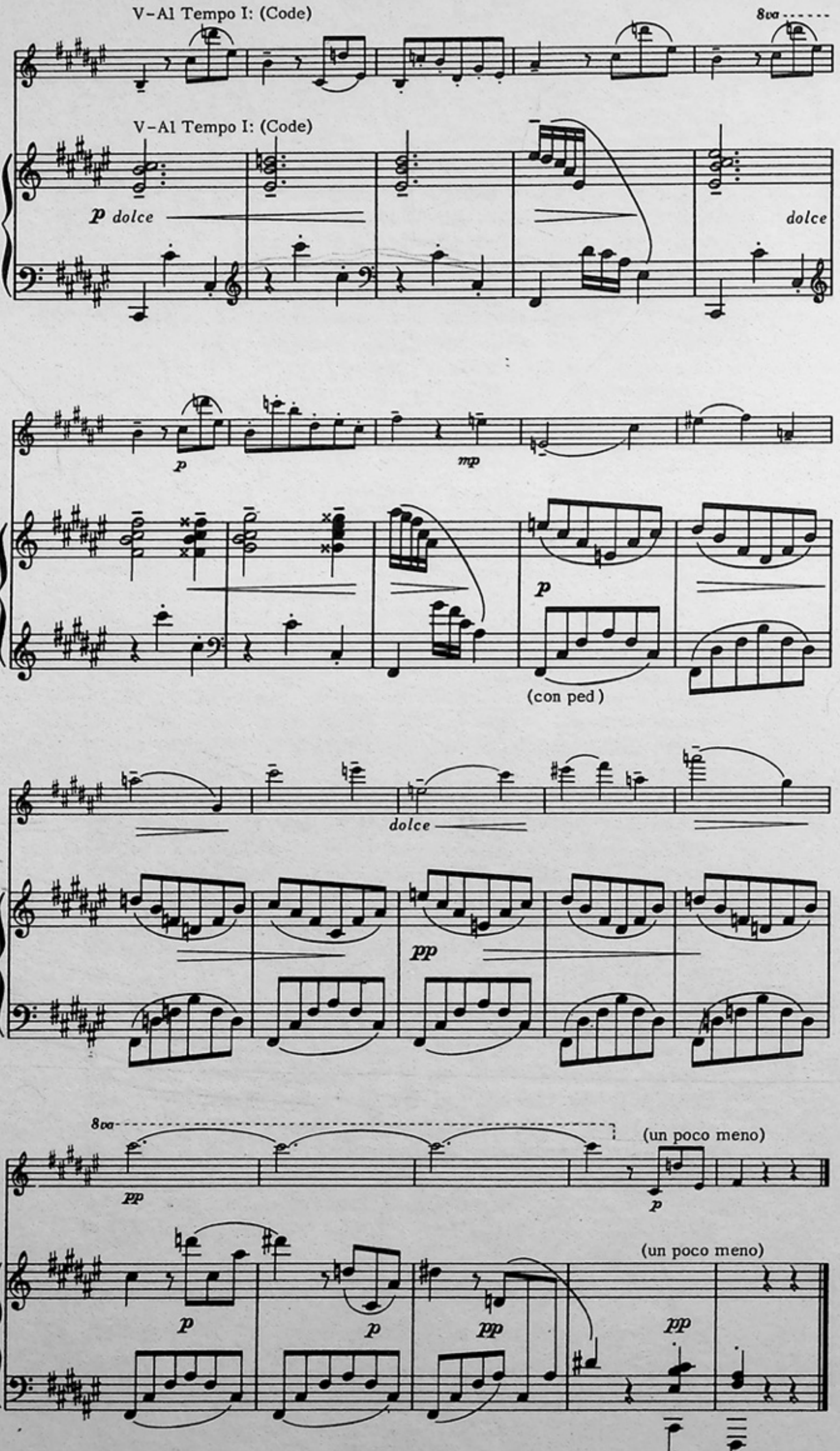

IV (a tempo-non cantabile)
F – R – I – E – D – M
mp
IV (a tempo-non cantabile)
mp
p
(con ped)
A – N
p
ff
sfp
IV
p


V–Al Tempo I: (Code)
8va
V–Al Tempo I: (Code)
p dolce
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(un poco meno)
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pp
(un poco meno)
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Viktor Tretyakov

Viktor Tretyakov was born in Siberia in 1946 and comes from a family of musicians. He began his violin studies at the age of six at the Irkutsk Conservatory and then entered the Central Music School of Moscow, which is the preparatory subsidiary for the Moscow Conservatory. Upon graduating with honors, he was selected for enrollment in advanced studies at the Moscow Conservatory with one of Russia's most noted pedagogues, Professor Yankelevitch. In 1965 he became the laureate of young Soviet violinists and in 1966 won first prize in the Third International Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow.

Upon this victory, David Oistrakh, who was chairman of the international panel of judges, said of Tretyakov, "He impressed everyone with the universality of his style and his rare virtuosity. It appears that for this 20-year-old violinist there simply are no difficulties. With equal ease he conquers the diabolical difficulties of the Paganini Concertos and the romantic excitement of Tchaikovsky's music. These qualities, together with his energy and temperament, helped him from the very first of numerous rounds of the Competition. He captivated everyone!"

Viktor Tretyakov's artistry has become celebrated throughout the Soviet Union, and he has toured England, Germany, Italy, Holland, Finland, Portugal, Austria, Japan and Latin American countries. He toured the United States in 1969, concluding this visit with a solo appearance with the Touring Moscow State Symphony under Maxim Shostakovich. He returned in 1970 and again in 1973, performing as soloist with the Leningrad Philharmonic under Gennady Rozhdestvensky in Carnegie Hall. His American appearances have included violin recitals as well as solo stints with the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Houston Symphony and other leading American ensembles. He renewed his ties with American audiences in a 1975 Carnegie Hall recital.

The cultural horizons of Tretyakov are broad and include a keen interest in art and literature, and he is also a capable pianist.

We first met Viktor Tretyakov following his 1975 New York recital and were immediately impressed by his handsome appearance; he has chiseled facial features, large blue eyes and a fair complexion. His manner is earnest, and his erect bearing suggests

an unusual personal discipline. (On stage he does not indulge in a single extraneous movement or gesture, and both his stride and stance are almost military in their sobriety.) We noticed, too, that his hands are large and eminently suited to handle all technical demands of the violin.

Tretyakov speaks English fairly well. Occasionally he would pause in search of the correct word to express his exact meaning, but our exchange was fluent and lucid. We spent some time learning to properly pronounce his name and that of his accompanist, Mikhail Erokhin, and were delighted when he eventually praised our efforts.

We asked Tretyakov how he had come to study the violin as a youngster.

He replied, "Actually my parents wanted me to study the piano, but there was no suitable piano teacher available—only a violin teacher."

"Do you mean to say that your career as a violinist began only because the violin teacher was more readily available?"

He smiled. "That's right."

"We also understand that you come from a musical family. Was your father also a musician?"

"Yes. He played tuba in a military band."

"How old were you when you started the violin?"

"Just six. My first teacher in Irkutsk was Gordin, G-o-r-d-i-n. I studied with him for about a year. Then he wrote about me to Professor Yankelevitch in Moscow and asked if I could have an interview. I studied with Yankelevitch from the age of seven until he died in 1973 at 65."

"Getting back to your childhood. Did you enjoy your daily violin practicing right from the beginning?"

"I did, at first. But after a few months, I realized that the violin was not a toy, that it was hard work. Then I began to grow cool toward practicing, and I am afraid that in my seventh and eighth year they had to force me to practice. After that, I gradually grew to like the violin more."

Tretyakov begins an up-bow. Observe the low wrist position of his bow arm.

"When did you become totally committed to the violin?"

"It was when I was eleven or twelve. Then I finally fell completely in love with the instrument."

"Which etudes did you study in your youth?"

Tretyakov reminisced for a moment. "Mazas, Kreutzer, Dont, Fiorillo and later, Paganini."

"Did you study Gaviniés, too?"

"No, I did not."

"Can you think of any special anecdote concerning your early years?"

"Well—yes. I remember how Professor Yankelevitch described our first interview to me some years afterward. He recalled how I first entered his studio with a huge bag of music. Then, as I played, he smiled and told me that I played just as badly as the amount of music I foolishly carried. I was lucky, though. He accepted me."

"What was your general education?"

"Oh, I went to school just like other youngsters, but I attended only a half day. The rest of the time was devoted to my music. I studied mathematics, history, chemistry, physics and some languages—English in particular. Later, when I entered the Moscow Conservatory, I studied philosophy, and, of course, music theory and solfége."

"Which violinists inspired you most as a youth?"

"Among our Soviet violinists, David Oistrakh and Leonid Kogan—of the foreign artists, Yehudi Menuhin and Issac Stern. When Stern played in Moscow, I was very impressed. I had heard Menuhin only through recordings."

We had listened to Tretyakov's violin from various vantage points in Carnegie Hall. The projection of tone was invariably large and penetrating in every part of the auditorium. We inquired about the instrument.

"There is speculation about the origin of this violin, though it is certainly of the Gagliano family. According to the label it was

Tretyakov in a mid-bow position. Note the bow arm is now parallel to the floor.

made by Alessandro Gagliano, the first famous maker of the Neapolitan school, who was born about 1660. But because of its brilliant sound, I believe that it was made by his eldest son, Nicolo. All of Nicolo's violins are said to be quite brilliant in tone. This one is especially so. The violin experts have been unable to agree as to which Gagliano was actually the maker."

In listening to Tretyakov's recital, it was readily apparent that one of his important assets is the ability to discriminate between diverse musical styles in his interpretations. We raised the point.

"Yes—I give a great deal of thought to this question. It is most important that different types of music be played—ah, what is the word—yes—authoritatively, as far as possible. When I select a piece of music I try to learn as much as I can about the composer and the period in which he lived. I try to recreate the inner feelings of the composer and the aura of his time.

"Last night, you will remember, we started the concert with the Schubert *Duo in A-major, Op. 162.* I tried to imagine that I lived in Vienna—that Schubert was my friend and was listening to me play his music. I did all I could to play the work with the elegance contained in the music. Later in the program, when we played Prokofiev's *Sonata No. 2,* I felt that I was once again Russian and that I could feel the style he wanted for his Sonata. I imagined that I could even hear his voice."

Tretyakov plays with a remarkably smooth bowing stroke. Both his down and up bows sustain the same quality of sound without the slightest deviance. In heavily articulated détaché passages, the down-bow and up-bow accents are exactly the same. He seemed particularly pleased when we vouchsafed this observation to him.

"I think this should be emphasized more by violin teachers," he said. "When I work with young students, I make a special point about this phase of bowing. Students do not seem to recognize this problem. I think much more time should be spent on all forms of détaché bowing. Even when we listen carefully, it should not be easy to detect unevenness in bowing. I feel that détaché bowings

Tretyakov's bow position at the frog. Notice the high wrist position, the above average length of his fingers and the "off-stick" extension of the first finger.

should be practiced in combination with slurred notes, in every conceivable form.

"For instance—take the martelé stroke. All players know that the down and up bows should be equal in attack, but only a small minority of students ever really concentrate on this enough for it to become second nature to them. Recently I had an interesting experience at a Master Class. I asked about forty young violinists to play the Second Kreutzer Etude—you know, the famous one—using the detaché stroke just above the middle of the bow. They played into a machine which registered the volume of each stroke. Only two of them had upbows that were equal in strength to their downbow. I wasn't a bit surprised," he added. "There is hardly ever sufficient time and effort given to perfect this special skill."

We presented Tretyakov with a set of the previously published *The Way They Play* four volumes. He beamed as he hastily examined them. "I see that many of my friends and colleagues are in these books. I shall be most interested in reading what they have to say about our art, and to look at the photographs, too. I'm sure that in the Soviet Union these books will be widely read and will help to inspire the coming generations of violinists."

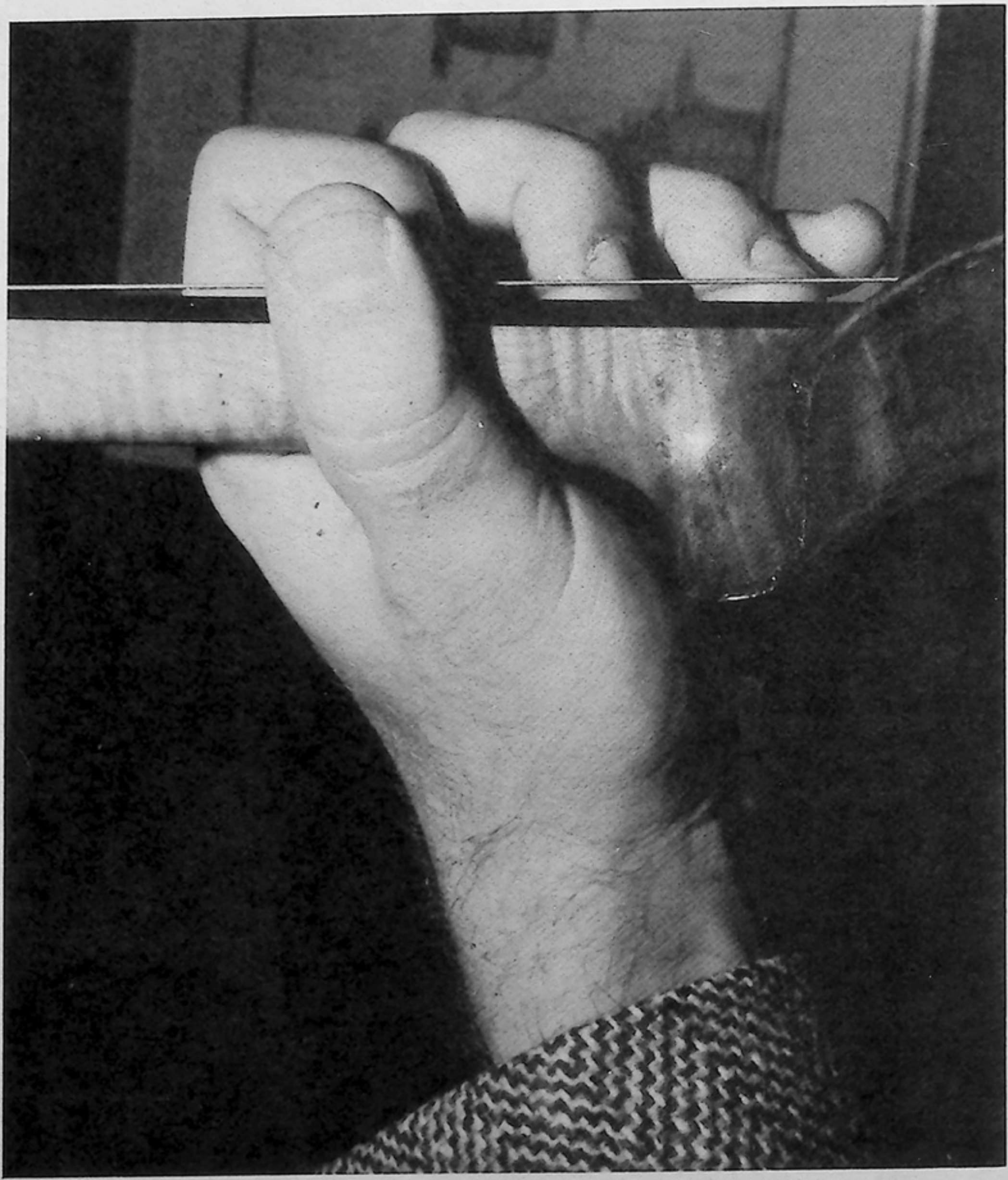
Tretyakov agreed to analyze, on the instrumental level, a movement of a major violin concerto for us. He selected the first movement of the Katchaturian Concerto, beginning with the tenth bar where the violin makes its first entrance.

"I prefer to take the tempo a bit on the slower side so that I can add the maximum vitality to the core of the sound. For the first few bars I stress the accent on the third beat of the measure, and I bow the notes solidly on the string near the frog."

"Do you lift the bow between the two up-bow eighth-notes in the opening bars?"

"No, but I pay special attention to them and I am careful to make them equal in length and not too short. In the 16th and 17th bars I strongly accent the last quarter note of each measure, with special attention to the 16th-notes. I play everything on the G-string until measure 24, and whenever possible I strive for expressiveness in the Armenian character, as the music indicates."

Applebaum and Tretyakov during their discussions for the material contained in this book.



Tretyakov fingers a third-position triple-stop.

All during this comprehensive analysis, Tretyakov would pick up his violin to illustrate each point as he explained it. He seemed to be thoroughly enjoying the recital. "Even though the theme is vigorous, it must sing—and when I say 'sing', I mean you must literally feel you are singing each note, including the 16th-notes.

"Bar 25 should be started 'forte' with the bow on the string with a crescendo until the end of bar 26. Both of the last two eighth notes are marked with accents, but I like a much stronger accent on the first of these two notes.

"Bar 37 is marked 'mezzo-forte,' but must not lose the vigorous style leading into bar 39, which is similar to the opening bars, only an octave higher. In bar 56 I again start 'forte' and make a crescendo, climaxed by the quarter note in bar 58, and continue the pattern in the subsequent bars. It is important that the climactic quarter notes be given full value."

"Would you make a slight accelerando in these bars as you build the crescendo?"

"No. The rhythm must be absolutely rigid, but I do use more bow to broaden out the last four 16ths before the quarter note, though I avoid any trace of allargando.

"In bar 74 we introduce the second theme. It is a bit slower—a beautiful melody that should be played with much warmth and vibrato. Here is a real challenge—to play with just a hint of rubato, yet without banal distortion. Measure 76 has always intrigued me. Here I stress the first C-sharp eighth note and again stress the 16th-note at the beginning of the second beat. But in bar 79, which is similar, I apply a bit of tenuto to this 16th-note and then take a slight breath before starting the fourth beat C-sharp.

"I play bar 80 a little differently than it is printed. I think that the phrase is more eloquent with the last two notes of the second quarter-note triplet slurred, instead of the first two. This permits the third and fourth notes of the bar to be played with separate bows, and I can give extra stress to the fourth note.

"Bars 82 and 83 are subtle and should be played freely, and in bar 86 I make a slight diminuendo and then build a gradual crescendo to bar 92, which I start piano at a little slower tempo. At bar 96 I return to the original 'tempo giusto' and keep the rhythm very exact.

"Measures 98, 99 and 100 are tricky and must be played as smoothly as possible, with imperceptible strings changes. In bar 101, I not only make a crescendo, but I end the bar with a sense of allargando in the last two groups of sextuplets."

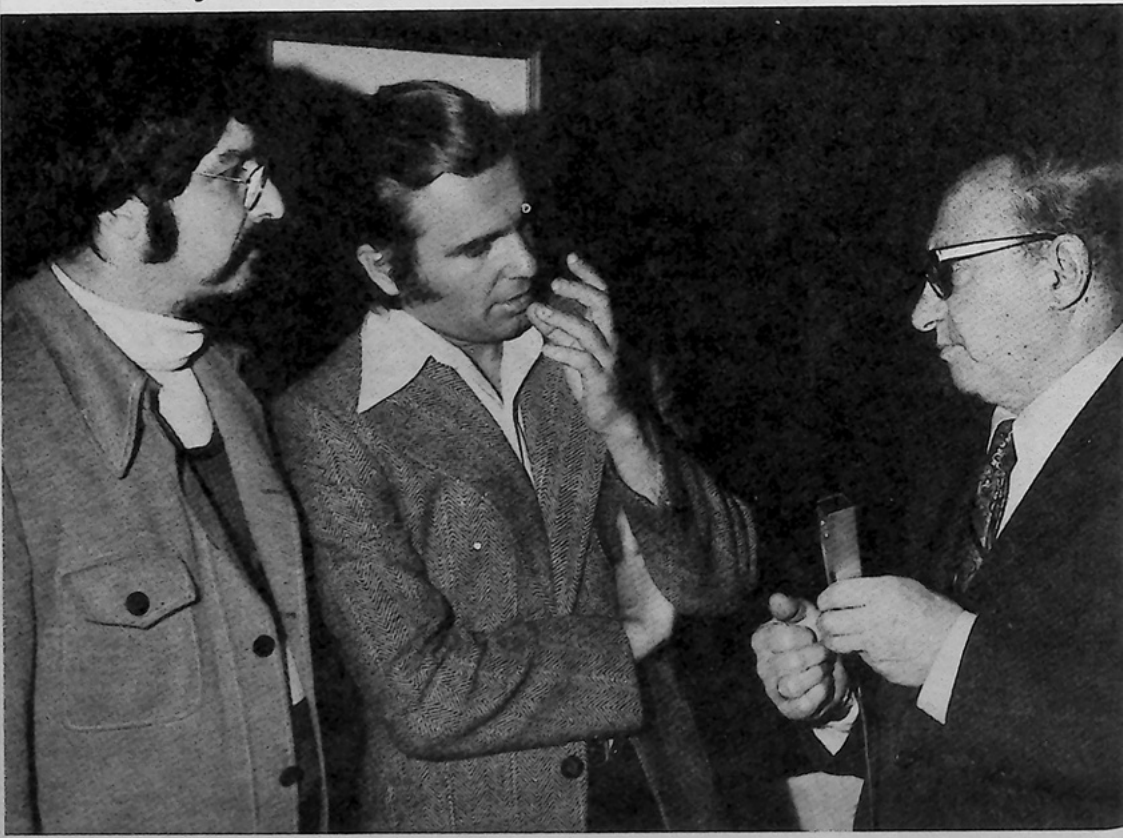
He played measure 103 for us with much warmth. "It should be played 'with a sob,' " he explained. "Bar 106 is marked 'rubato,' but each note of the detaché must be firmly and distinctly articulated. I start a bit slower in bar 112 so that the stringendo in the next bar can be more effective."

"Do you think there should be a slight acceleration in bars 125 and 126?"

"No—and I prefer a very solid detaché bowing."

In demonstrating bar 134 he made a small diminuendo, even though it contains an upward scale figure. "I think it adds a degree of loftiness to the phrase," he said. "Then I build a crescendo from

Violist Paul Paradise, Tretyakov and Samuel Applebaum during the recording of the various interviews with Tretyakov.



bar 139 to 141, where I make a 'subito piano'—then another crescendo to a 'double-forte' at bar 145. It is important that the last beat-and-a-half of bar 147 be clearly enunciated, with a very strong accent on the high G-Flat in bar 148.

"From bar 150 through 155 we have two distinctive moods—bars 151, 153 and 155 should be graceful—even with a tiny amount of rubato within a strictly rhythmic framework."

"Do you find the octave grace-notes in measures 157 and 159 rather awkward to play?"

"Very much so. I practice them carefully so that they can be heard clearly."

"In bar 160 the development begins. Although the figures are rhythmic I try to instill them with a sense of freedom."

"Don't you use a percussive spiccato as indicated by the dot marks in measure 164?"

"No—I prefer a broad brush-type spiccato, close to the frog, with more arm, and in the middle of bar 166 I change it to a détaché—still below the middle of the bow, and firmly on the string.

"In bar 193 the development of this movement begins—at least in my opinion. It is quite difficult and must be played with a great precision, with the eighth-notes slightly shortened in a sort of 'brush-spiccato' in up-bows, rather than a martelé. And I always accent the first of the two 16th-notes preceeding the eighth-notes.

"I like to make a light glissando in bar 199 as I shift downward to the D-sharp in the first two 16th-notes, with a slight allargando. I compensate for this, though, within the bar, so that the over-all rhythmic impulse is not lost.

"Bar 205 should be played with maximum feeling, and I vibrate on each of the eighth-notes. Then, in bar 214, to provide some contrast with the surrounding bars, I play the lower F-trill on the A-string, and in bar 215, on the E-string, with a small glissando going to the higher F-trill."

"How do you conceive the *Lento, ma non troppo* at bar 217?"

"It should be very free and imaginative. The opening arpeggios I play like a chord, and the second I roll in clear arpeggio style. I strive for the greatest possible variety. In my own performances, I find myself playing the repetitive figures differently each time. Seven bars after the *Lento* I make a diminuendo, and on the eighth bar I start a 'double-piano' and play the figures softly as arpeggios— expressively—with the grace notes slowly rolled and warm in sound."

"You seem to play one arpeggio more quickly than another."

"Definitely—I try to vary them. But in the 17th and 18th bars after the *Lento*, I play the grace notes as chords.

"In the 21st through 24th bar of this section I play the first half with a little rubato. One must try to be creative in these bars, I think. In the 28th, 29th and 30th bars, I ignore the printed dots and broaden these notes instead. From the 31st bar I observe the staccato dot markings. The 34th and 35th bars I play 'forte' and expansively, but the 36th and 37th bars should be 'piano,' to create an echo effect."

"How do you handle the following rubato bar?"

I try to make the crescendo eighth-note triplets dramatic, and play the 32nd-note triplets on the last beat legato, instead of staccato as they are marked. I feel this gives the figure more significance.

"Starting from the 43rd bar after the *Lento*, I play the first note in each group of the 16th-notes very broadly to bring out these notes in a melodic manner. At the 46th bar I start 'double-piano' and build a big crescendo. At this point in the Russian edition," he observed, "there is a cut." (We were using the edition published by the Leeds Music Corporation, with annotations by Harold Sheldon, in which the complete section is written out.) Tretyakov suggested we go ahead to the original bar 262—the third bar after the *Poco Meno Mosso.*

"Here, while the flute plays the theme, the violin should weave about with much freedom and a feeling of fantasy, but in harmony with the basic tempo set by the orchestra. The triplets can be either slurred or separate, to lend a variety of color." He demonstrated these options with engaging charm.

"At bar 281 I play 'appassionata dramatico'—with all the emotion I can. And from bar 305 through 309 I play the eighth-notes rather short because there are so many string crossings. This helps to give clarity to the passage work and gives the effect of a lightly satiric scherzando.

"I broaden out in bar 310, and at 313 I use a bow stroke which is a compromise between martelé and detaché. From bar 327 I play the next four bars in much the same manner as I do at the very beginning of the movement. And in bars 339, 340 and 341, I use a very heavy spiccato just before the final notes."

Thus we ended our visit with Tretyakov, and the satisfaction on both sides was mutual and genuine. We wished him great success in his burgeoning career, and he expressed extreme pleasure with our interview.

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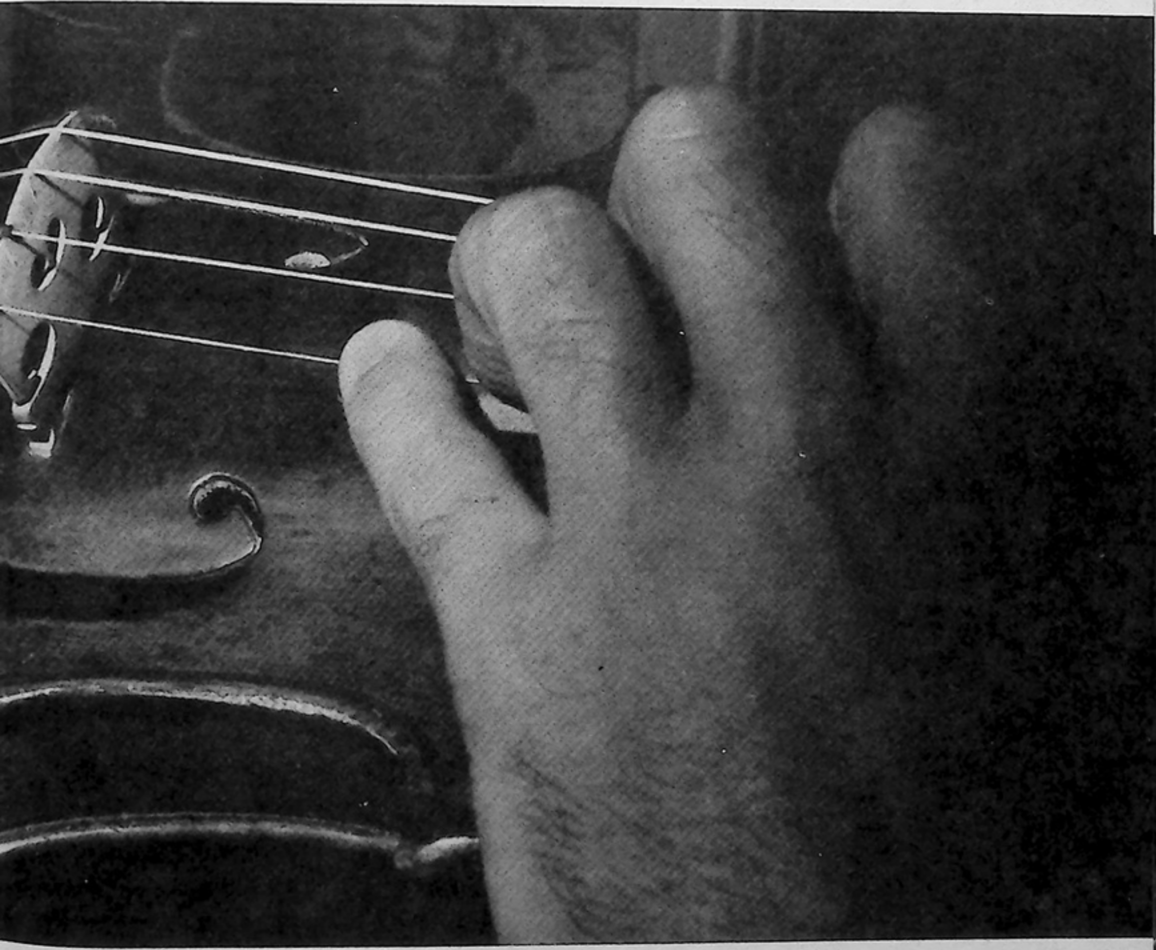
Tretyakov invades the E-string stratosphere. Note the extraordinary roundness of his finger position for so high a register.



Let us make a survey of some of Tretyakov's live recital and recording performances so as to put this splendid young violinist into critical perspective. Here are two Tretyakov recital programs—one from the Los Angeles Music Center Pavilion (1970)—the other from New York's Carnegie Hall (1975).

Los Angeles—November 8, 1970—with pianist Mikhail Erokhin.
1. *Sonata No. 1 in G, Op. 78 for Violin & Piano*. . . . . Brahms
2. *Duo in A-Major, Op. 162 for Violin & Piano*. . . . . Schubert
3. *Five Melodies*. . . . . Prokofiev
4. *Poeme*. . . . . Chausson
5. *Introduction et Rondo Capriccioso*. . . . . Saint-Saens

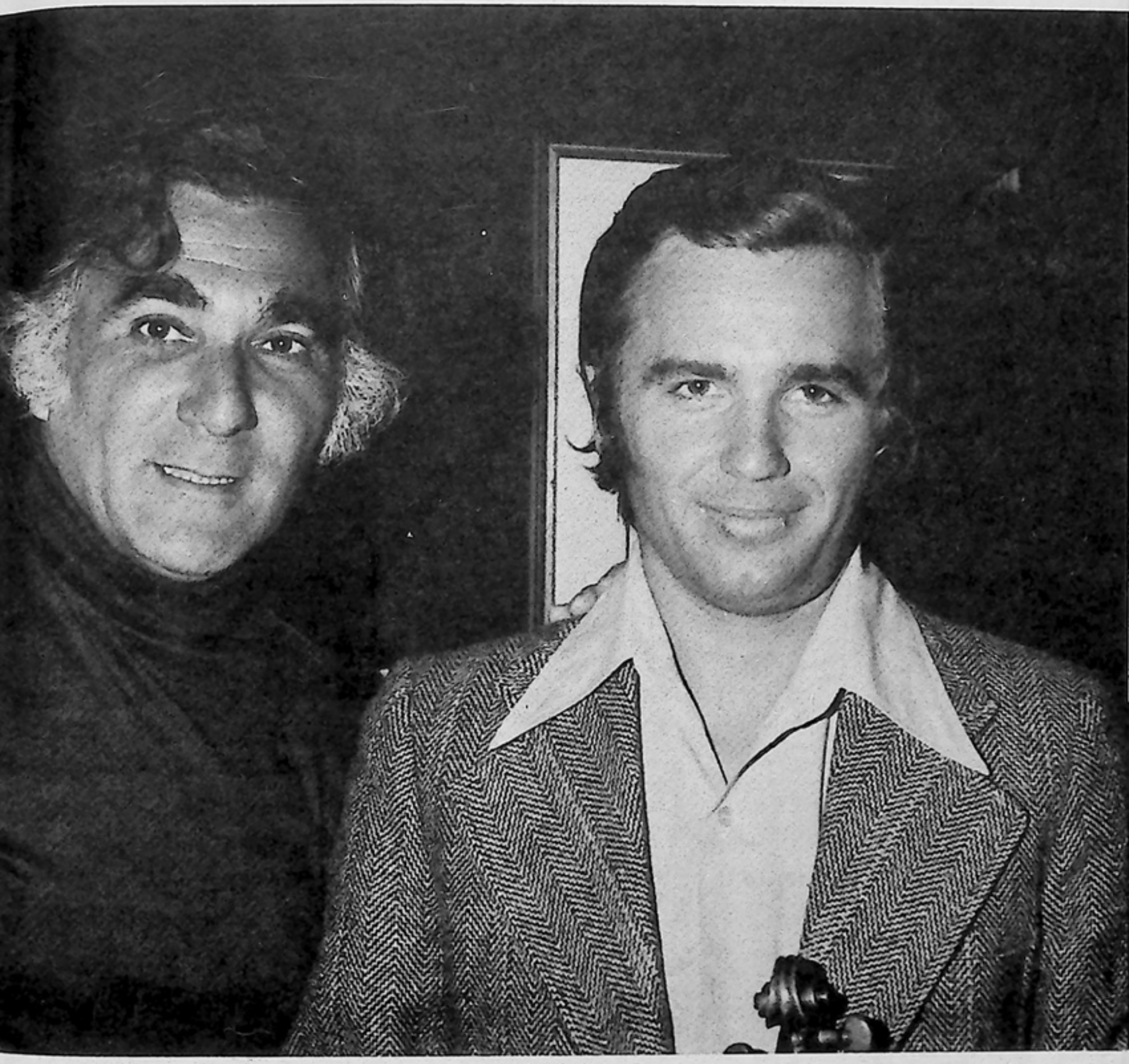
(a) March (from *Love for Three Oranges*). . . . . . . Prokofiev Heifetz
(a) *Caprice Viennois*. . . . . Kreisler

New York—February 15, 1975—with pianist Mikhail Erokhin
1. *Duo in A-Major, Op. 162 for Violin & Piano*. . . . . Schubert
2. *Sonata in A-Major for Violin & Piano*. . . . . Franck
3. *Sonata No. 2 in D-major, Op. 94 for Violin & Piano*. . Prokofiev
4. *La Companella*. . . . . Paganini

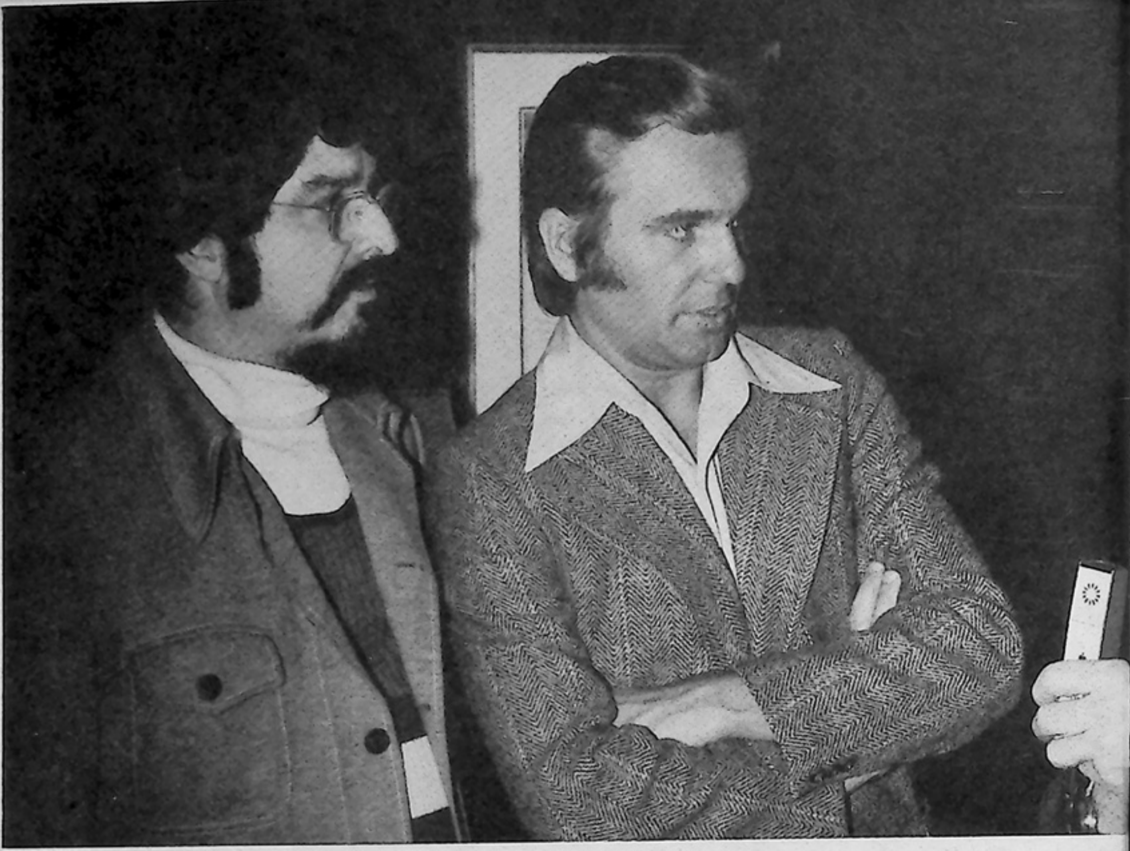
These recitals and several major recordings (all made in the Soviet Union) provide a reasonably wide repertoire from which some appraisals of his playing can be deduced. We will first offer general observations before we go into specific performances.

There can be no doubt that Viktor Tretyakov is a bravura-type virtuoso, a technician of elite accomplishment. His intonation is pure and fleckless, and his manual flexibility enables him to handle any type of music with ease. There are no digital challenges he cannot negotiate. His tone, as dictated by his bowing, is large, resonant and ever smooth, and he is capable of producing an explosive attack, plus many bowed dynamic levels and shadings.

The inherent quality of his tone is not sensuous or lushly vibrant, though his vibrato is well-modulated and varied in usage. Rather, it is a tone adaptable to all genres of music, without a highly personalized timbre or vibrato. One could not rightly describe the Tretyakov tone as "gorgeous" or "ravishing," but it is silken and multi-faceted. His vibrato is carefully controlled, but not of maximum speed and intensity. Tretyakov can play with



Dr. Herbert R. Axelrod and Viktor Tretyakov. The two had met before in Russia.



"When I select a piece of music I try to learn as much as I can about the composer and the period in which he lived. I try to re-create the inner feelings of the composer and the aura of his time." Paul Paradise listens to Tretyakov.

'fire'—but the 'fire' is in his manner of playing and visceral application rather than in the sound itself. He possesses a visible degree of individuality, though this individuality is manifested in his interpretations, not in any singularity of sound.

One of Tretyakov's most significant qualities is his insistence upon being his own man violinistically. Where so many contemporary Russian violinists have been influenced by David Oistrakh, to a greater or lesser degree, Tretyakov spurns the role of imitator. Such often-copied characteristics of Oistrakh's playing as his downward one-finger slides, and 'off-and on' vibrato, which the "Great David" employed so entrancingly and were an innate part of his violinistic personality, are non-existent in the Tretyakov performance.

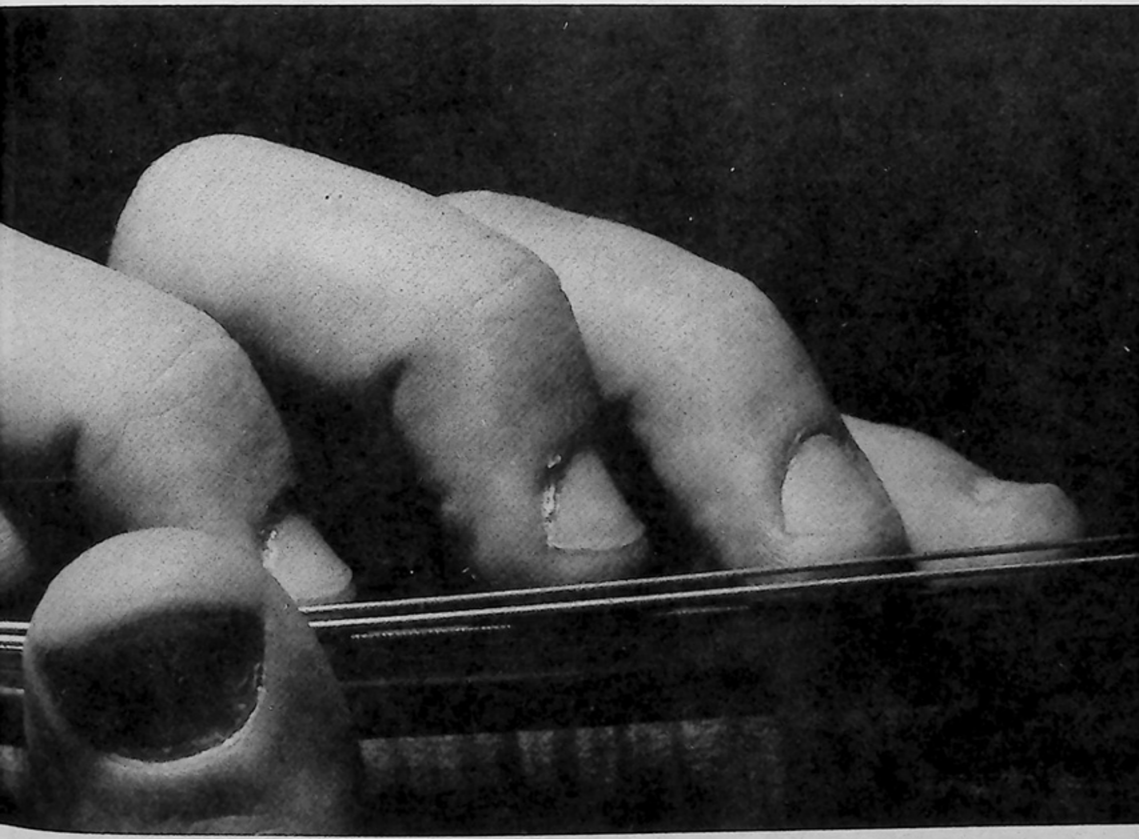
A dominating feature of Tretyakov's playing is his indomitable sincerity of purpose—his violinistic and musical integrity. Carelessness or superficiality is foreign to his musical way-of-life.

He strives to interpret each composition in a manner compatible with the style and period of the music, yet avoiding inflexible academicism.

Like all instrumentalists, Tretyakov sometimes plays music for which he does not have temperamental affinity. A comparative case in point is touched upon in this portion of a recital review—(Los Angeles, 1970)—"In Prokofiev's *March,* Tretyakov generated a marvelous dynamic drive that attained an incredible climax. Kreisler's *Caprice Viennois* started promisingly, but fell victim to a plodding tempo and flaccid doublestops that projected too little of the vital intensity and joie d'vivre that made a Fritz Kreisler performance an unforgettable event."

Another provocative excerpt from the same review states—

Close-up of Tretyakov's left hand in a normal position. Observe the thumb position relative to the fingerboard and the comparatively narrow width of the fingertips.



"The excitement really started after intermission. Prokofiev's *Five Melodies* were etched with impeccable taste and modal variety. But the program highlight was an eloquent, subtly-nuanced interpretation of Chausson's *Poeme* that recalled the spacious sweep of the Ysaye tradition. The *Introduction* in Saint-Saens' *Introduction et Rondo Capriccioso* lacked the spirit of piquant Gallic elan, but the *Rondo Capriccioso* sparkled with an audacious, personalized attention to detail rarely heard these days. The final page avoided undue haste, and was neatly and tastefully delineated."

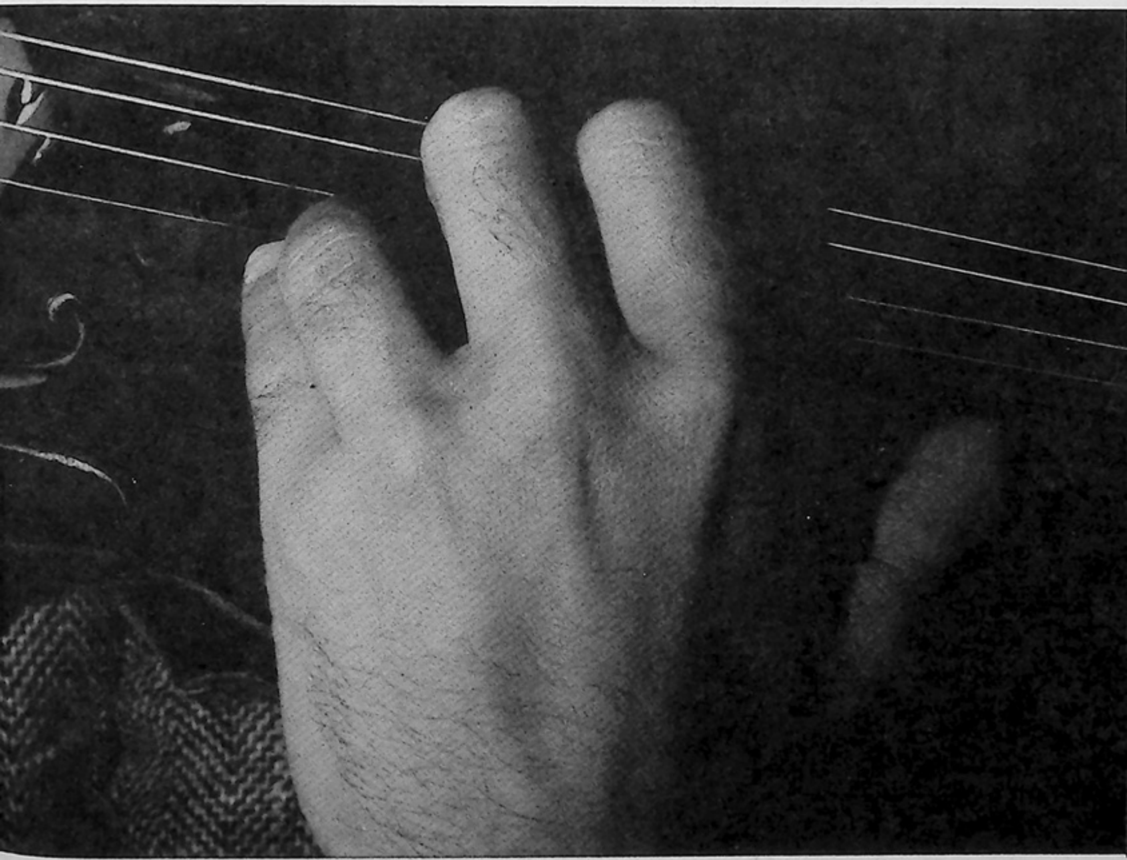
The recording by which Tretyakov is best known to the American disc audience is the Paganini Concerto No. 1 in D-major, released in the United States by Melodiya-Angel Records (EMI-Capitol), with Neimye Varvy and the Moscow Philharmonic. It is a dazzling performance, virile in thrust, technically immaculate and bold in spirit. The first movement cadenza by Sauret comes off as a spectacular tour-de-force; the operatic "Adagio Espressivo" may not project the ultimate drama, but does have a good measure of intense ariosity; the finale is unusually fast, and all, including the double harmonics, is crisply articulated. This Tretyakov performance, made in his early 20's, easily ranks among the dozen or so outstanding discings of this simplistic, devilishly difficult (in the violinistic sense), radiantly Italianate music. And this recording contains some of Tretyakov's most impassioned playing.

Two Russian discs by Tretyakov (Melodiya) incorporate a wide musical gamut. In Brahms' "Sonata No. 3 in D-Minor, Op. 108," the violinist obviously strives for introspection in an interpretation that is quite individualized. His tempos are decidedly elastic and the quality of tone rather inconsistent. At times the performance conjures up elements of excitement, but the pacing is uneven, resulting in intermittent tedium. The Adagio tends to lose propulsion; the sound is fairly vibrant but not rich. The "Un poco presto e con sentimento" stresses the "con sentimento," with little "un poco presto," and the plodding pace sometimes interferes with the natural flow of the music. The "Presto"is solidly workmanlike but a bit stodgy in several sections. In all, it is a definitive interpretation, but not one calculated to thrill its listeners. The piano collaboration of Mikhail Erokhin, sensitive yet uninhibited, contributes much to the performance.

In Ravel's "Tzigane," Tretyakov is essentially miscast, since the gypsy ethos (and sound) are not part of his temperamental equipment, though the performance is cleanly wrought. Again (and surprisingly), in the Vitali-Charlier "Chaconne," all is chaste and conscientious, but lacking in propulsion and diversity of pacing in an 'overlong,' uninteresting interpretation. The brief Ravel "Piece in form of a Habanera" is aptly languorous but devoid of voluptuousness.

In a change of pace, Tretyakov offers a superb discing of Bach's "Solo Sonata No. 1 in G-minor." The playing is straightforward, intelligently limned, but never dry. The "Adagio" moves forward serenely, with perceptive dynamic nuances and strong, poised tone. The "Fugue" has beautifully delineated fugal pat-

Tretyakov's left hand in a vibrant, lyric passage.



Paul Paradise, Viktor Tretyakov and Samuel Applebaum posing for their "Good-bye" photograph after Tretyakov impressed New York with a magnificent recital in 1977.

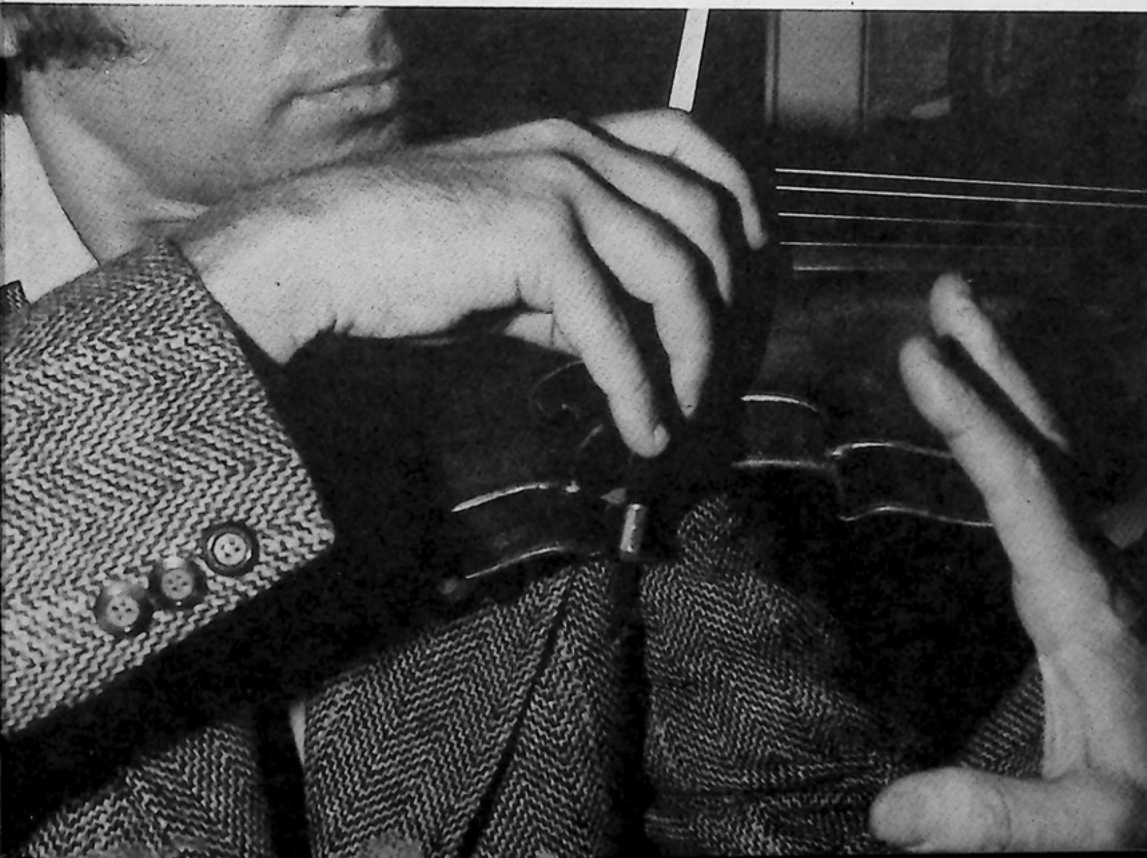
terns, the chords ring out eloquently and the thematic notes in the various chord combinations are expertly emphasized. The bowing is immaculate. The "Sicilienne" flows effortlessly, with each detail neatly in place. The "Presto" is faultlessly articulated, and Tretyakov's powerful detaché strokes have exceptional clarity.

In two Paganini "Caprices," No. 17 smartly avoids dull dynamic repetition in the scale filigree passages, after an expansive opening interlude, and the horrendous octave batteries are impressively clean. This is one of the best recorded versions. "Caprice No. 24" is also outstanding, with extraordinary bowing inflections, liquid octaves, spotlessly pure runs of thirds and tenths, and a really novel 'loud and soft' exposition of the crackling left-hand pizzicatos. Both are played without piano support, in the original form.

Two more Paganini opuses with L. Kurakova at the piano, have the "Cantabile" in songful stylistic relief and solidly vibrant—a lucid, songful performance, though not as intense in sound as the discings of Kogan and Gulli. However, the "Il Palpiti" in the Kreisler arrangement (more difficult than the original) is a stunning and superlatively honest performance. After an orderly melodic opening, Tretyakov tosses off the leaping double-stop sorties, the double harmonics, the finger twisting arpeggios in sixths and, finally, the fiendish fingered-octave scales with hair-raising clarity. The left-hand finger pizzicatos detonate like mortar shells. Perhaps it does not quite reflect the 'kamikaze' assault and speed of the Ricci version, but the sheer integrity of Tretyakov's technical mastery must surely impel any violinist to doff his hat in respect and admiration.

Viktor Tretyakov is one of the elite representatives of the younger generation, and he is an artist who can be relied upon to carry on both the hallowed traditions of violin virtuosity and disciplined, intelligent music-making.

Tretyakov exhibits another of his highly symmetrical bow positions at the frog.



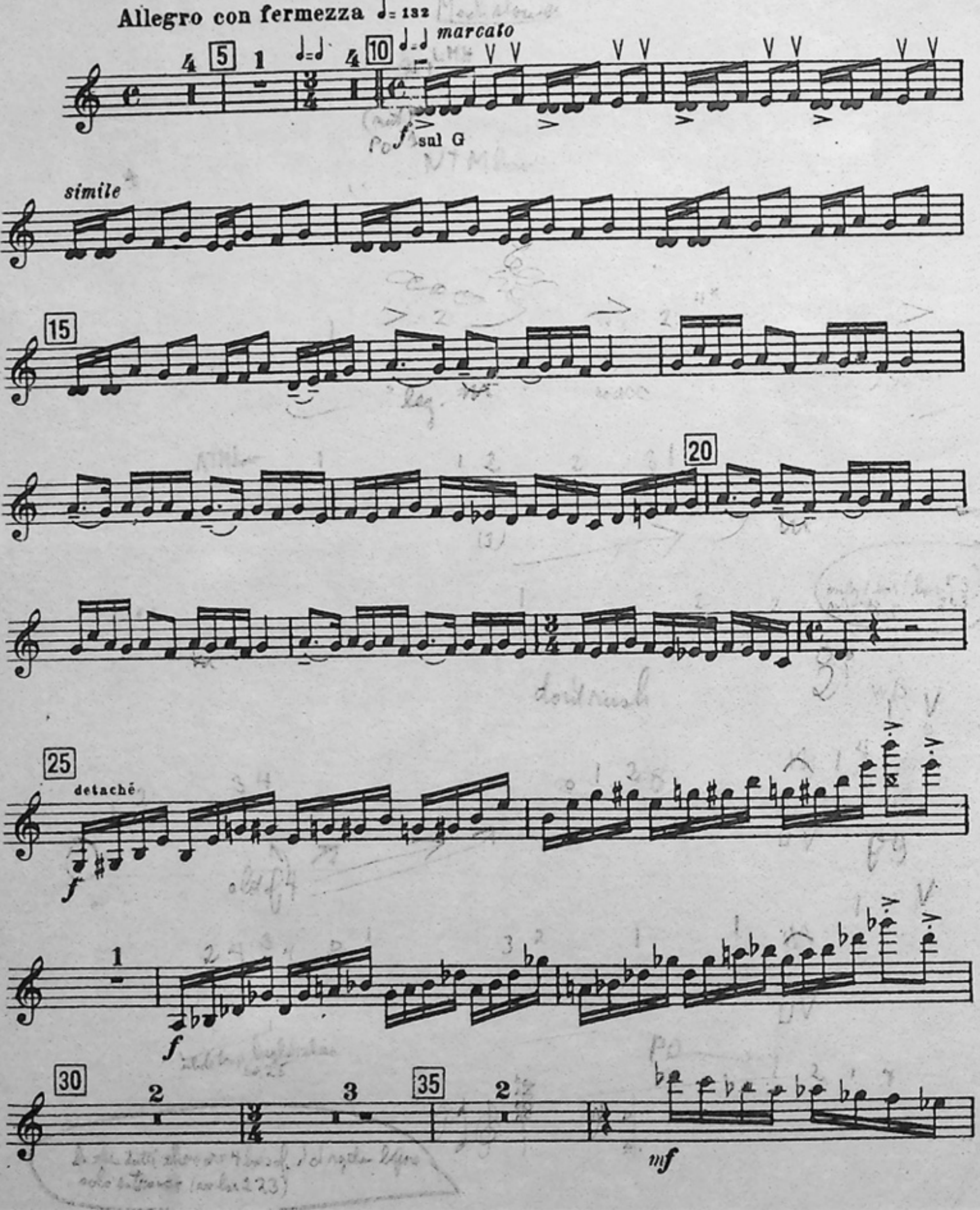
CONCERTO

FOR VIOLIN AND ORCHESTRA

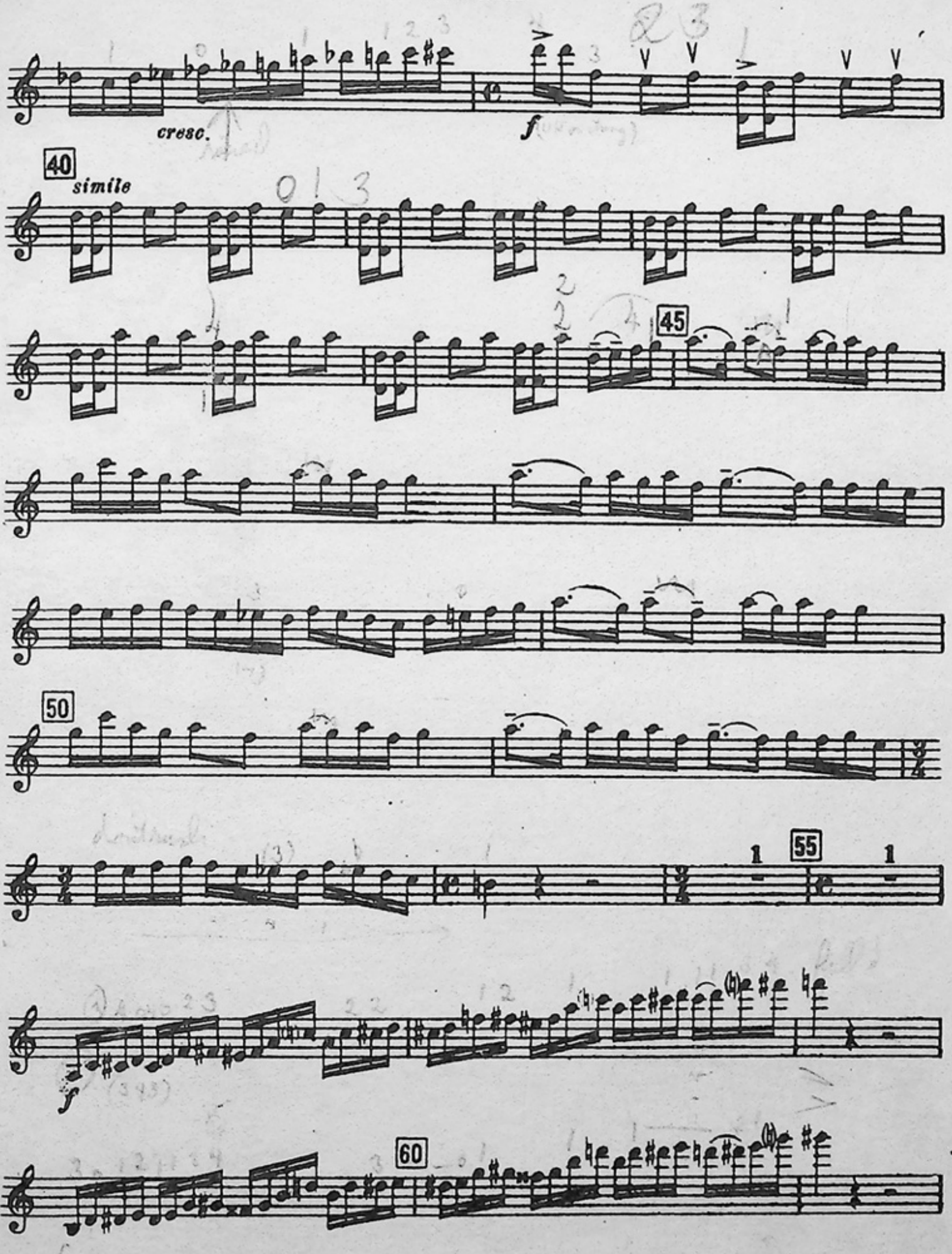
Edited with special annotations by
HAROLD SHELDON

By
ARAM KHACHATURIAN

1



Violin



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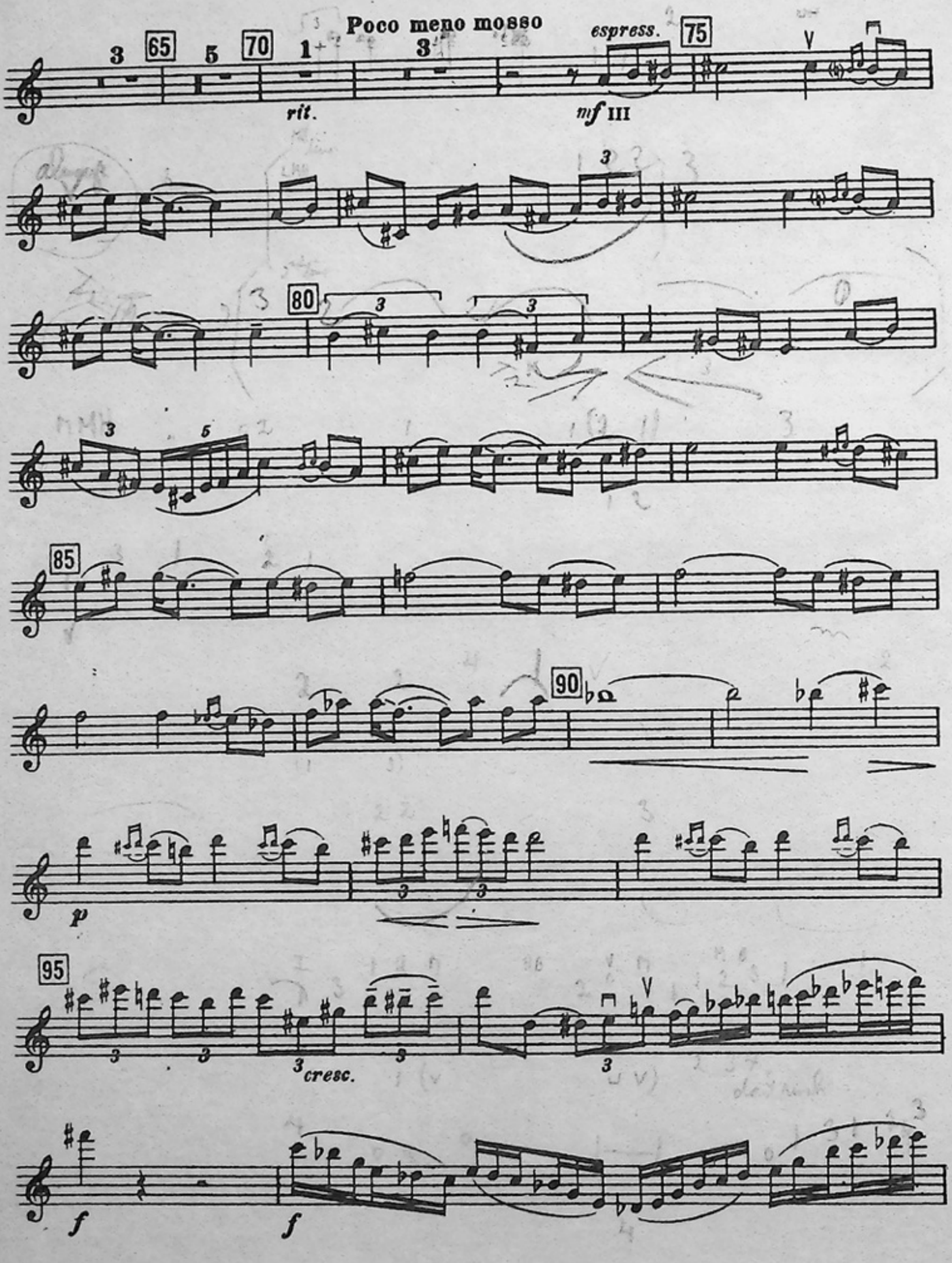
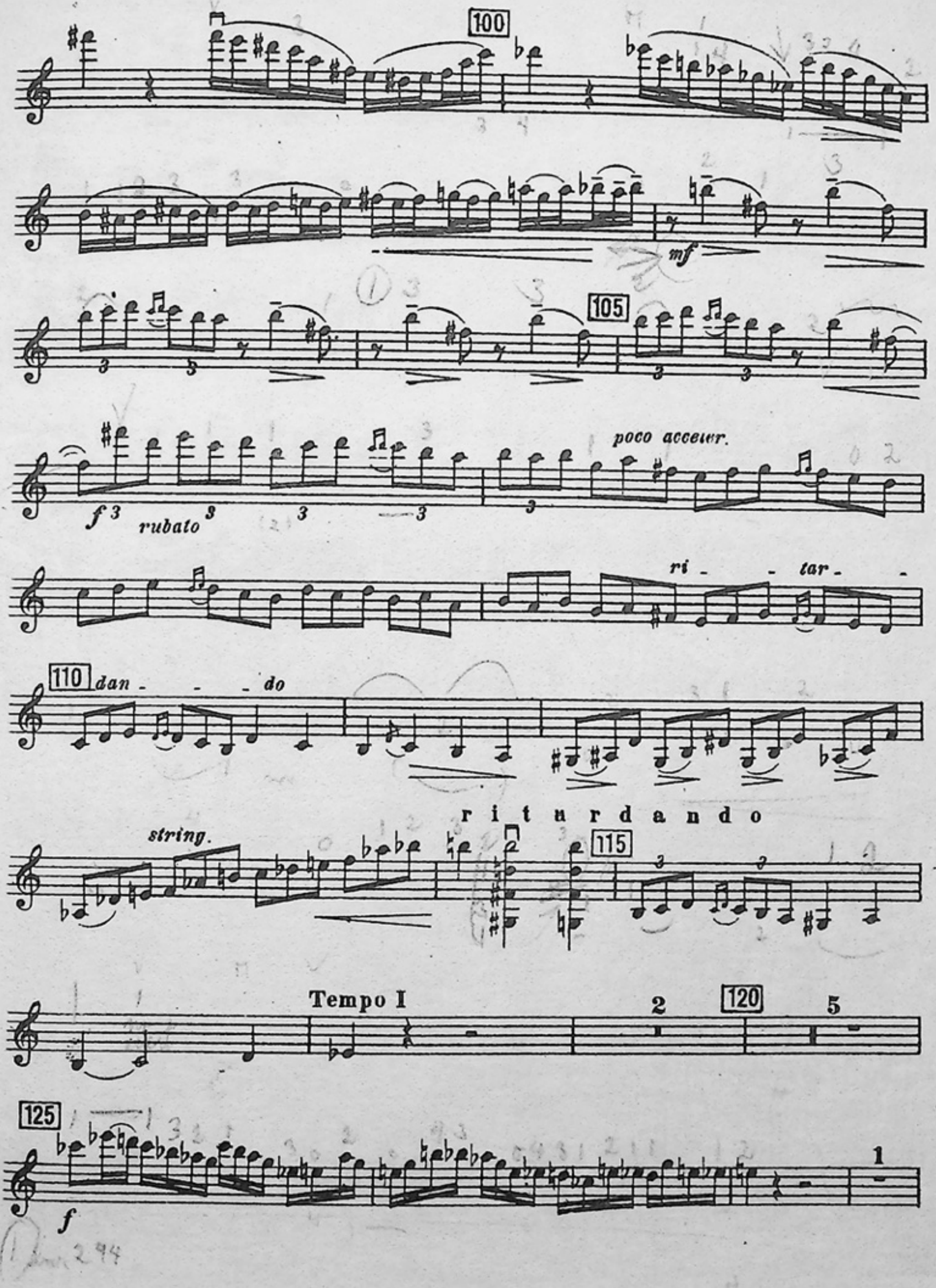
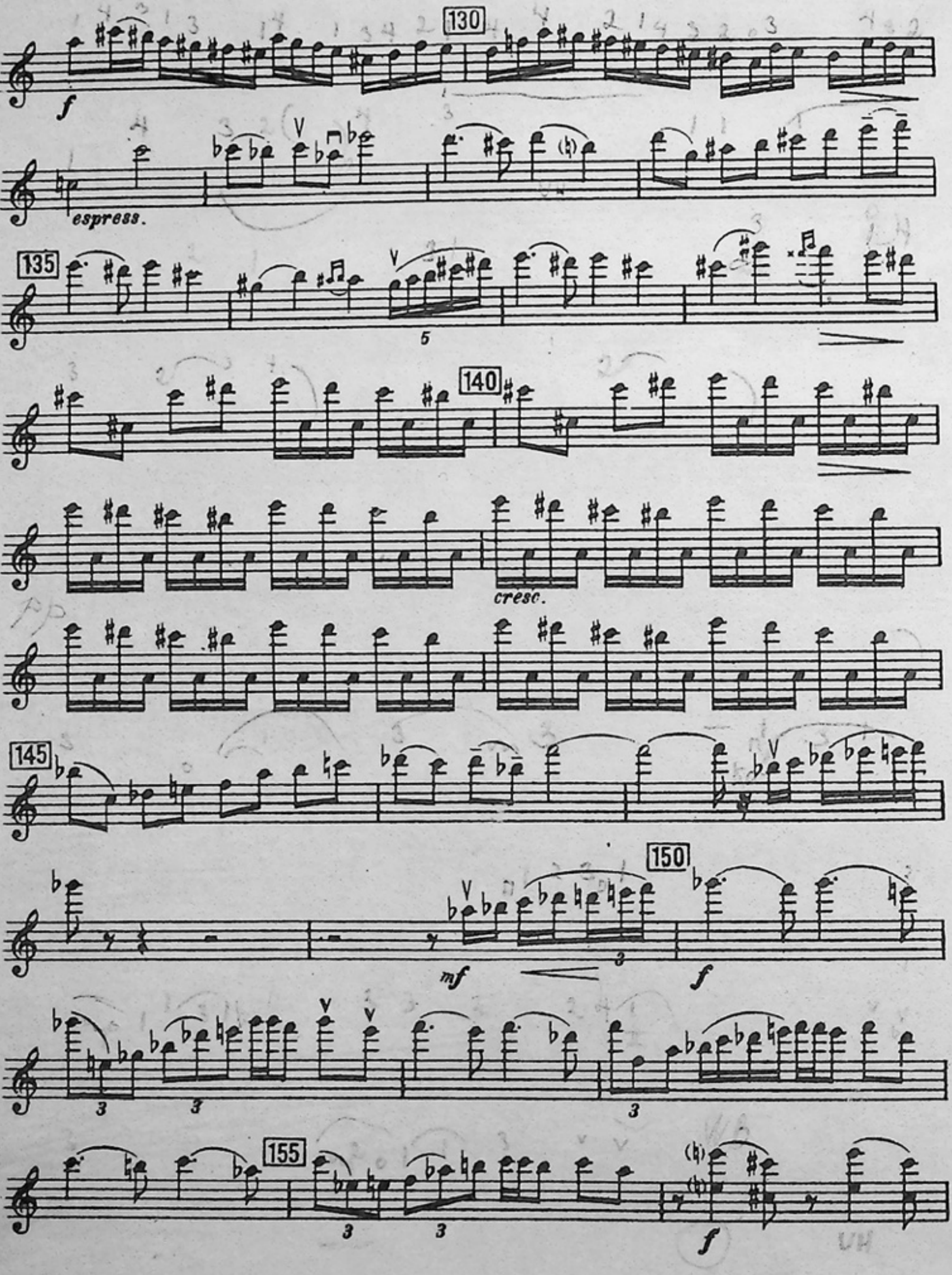
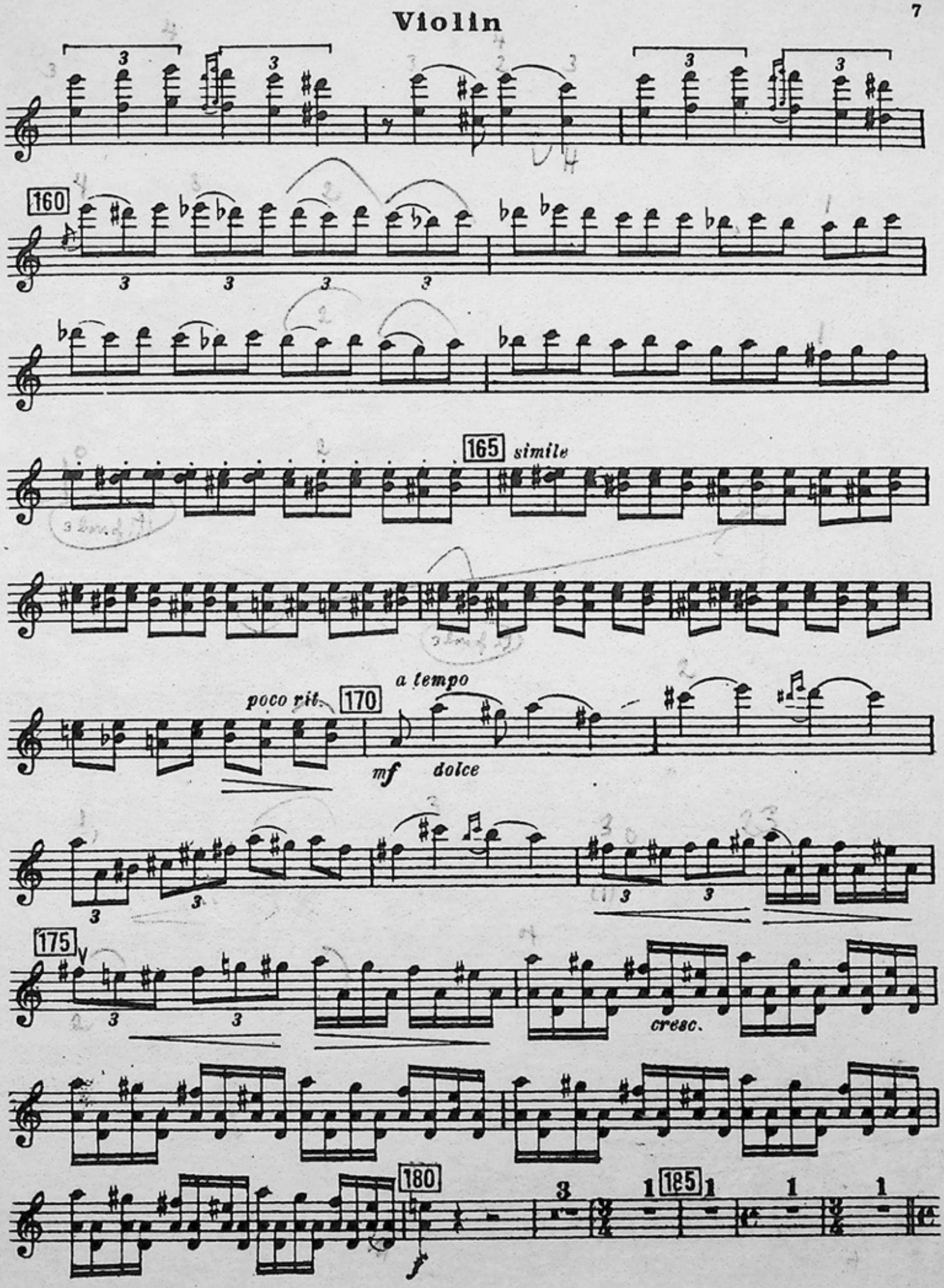
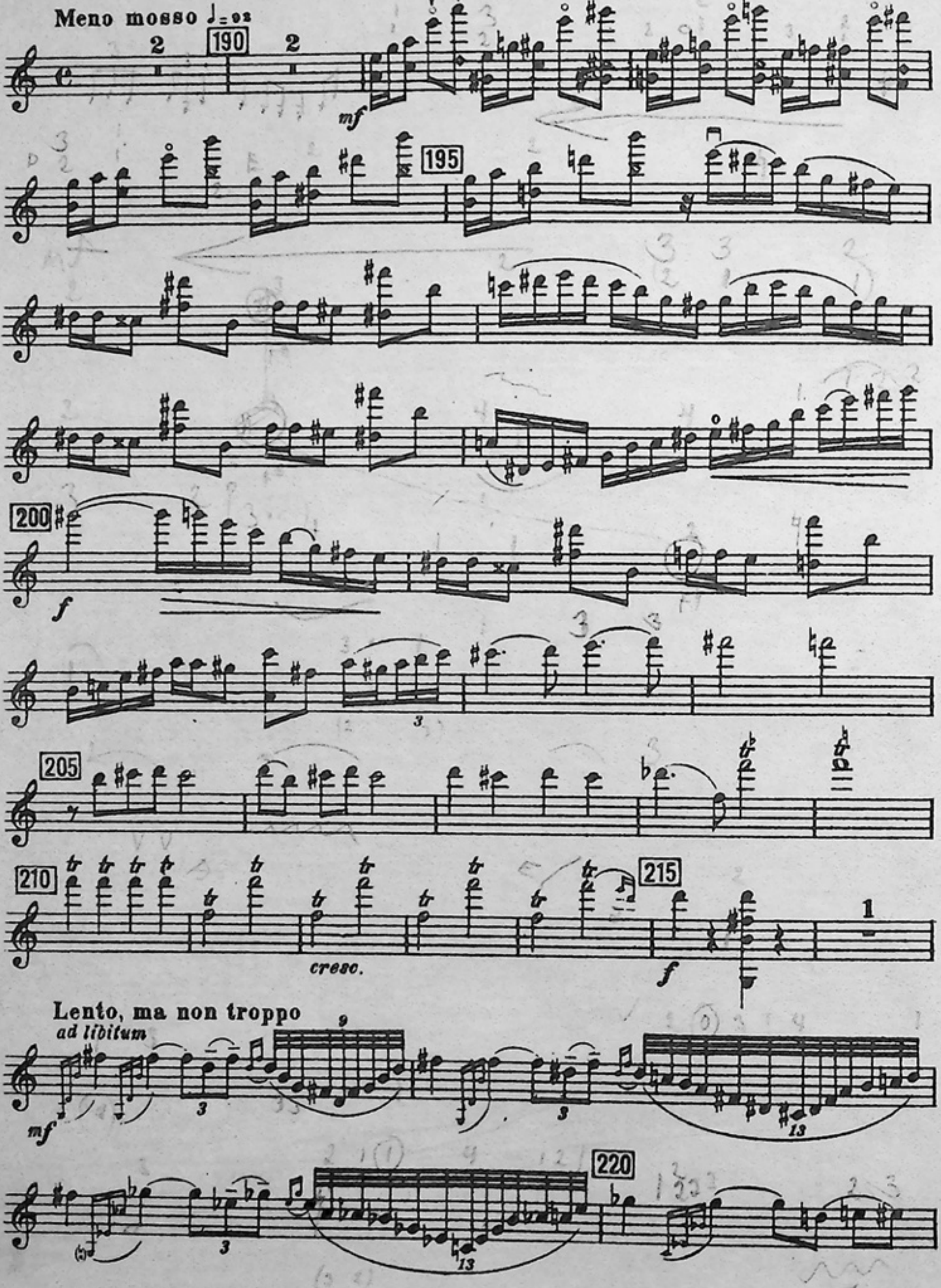

Poco meno mosso
espress.
3
65
5
70
1
3
75
rit.
mf III
80
85
90
p
95
cresc.
f
f


100
mf
105
f
rubato
poco acceler.
ri - - tar -
110
dan - - - do
string.
ritardando
115
Tempo I
2
120
5
125
f
1

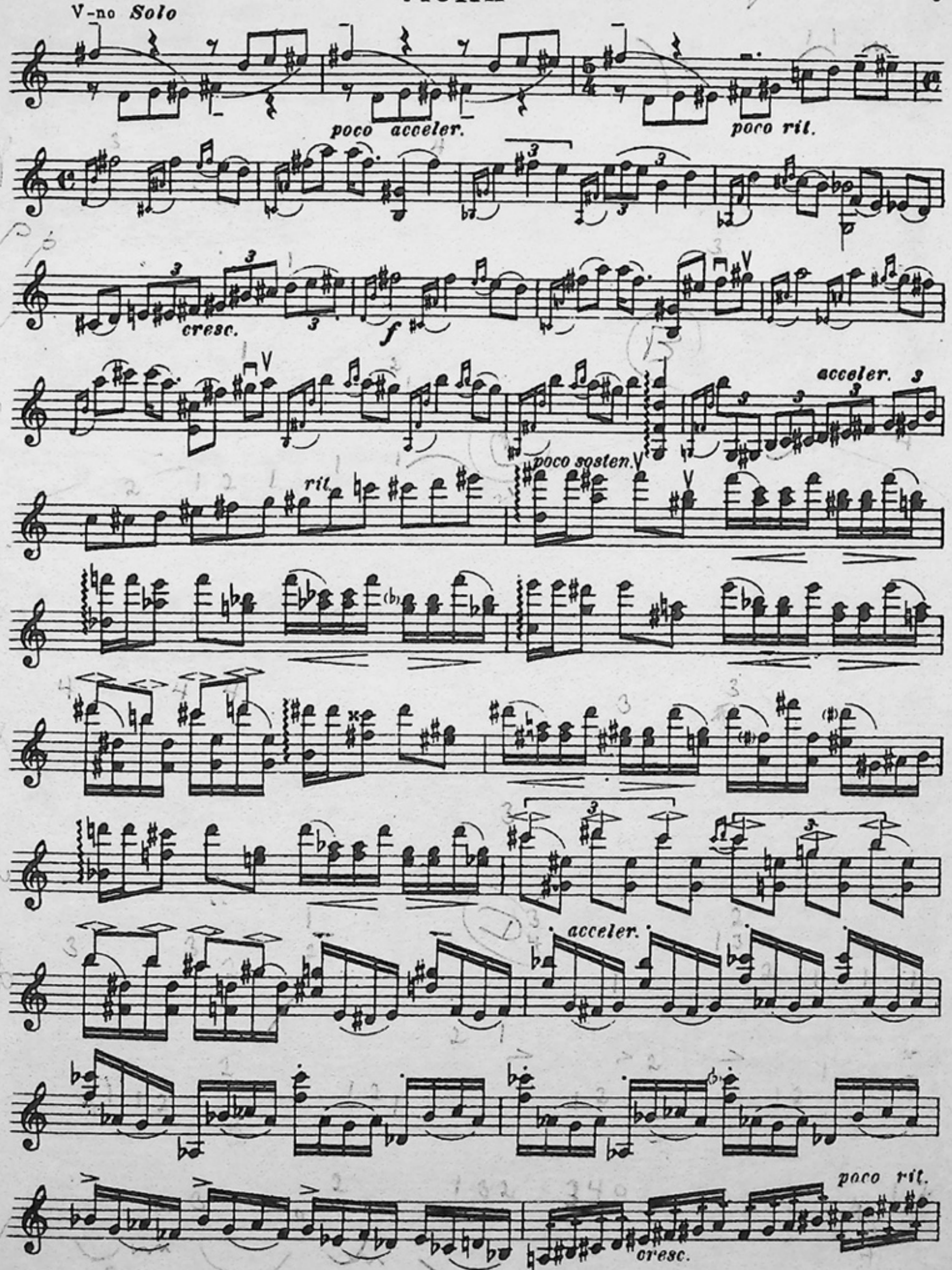
Violin

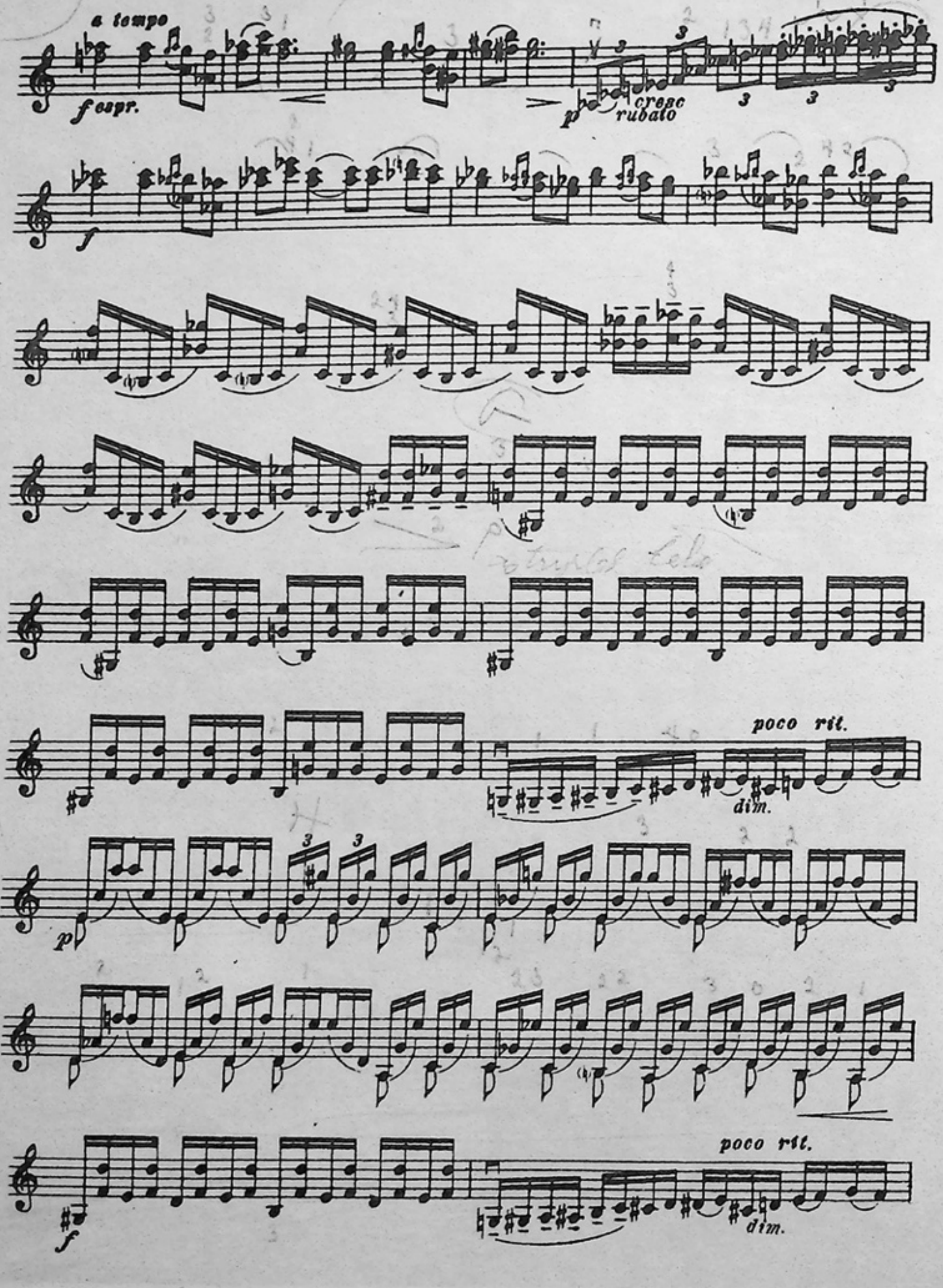


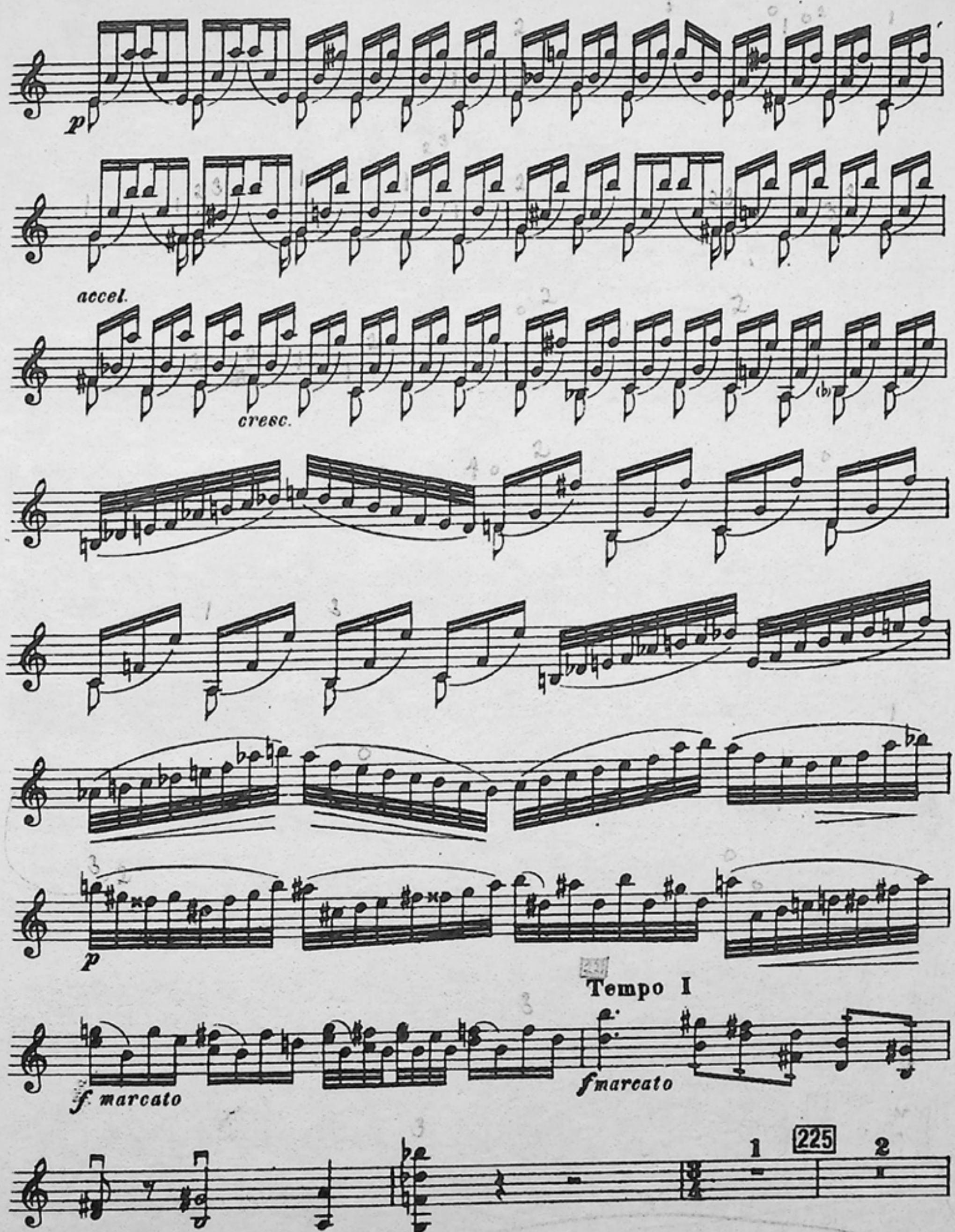

160
165
simile
poco rit.
170
a tempo
mf
dolce
175
cresc.
180
f
185


Meno mosso ♩= 92
mf
f
cresc.
f
Lento, ma non troppo
ad libitum
mf

Violin

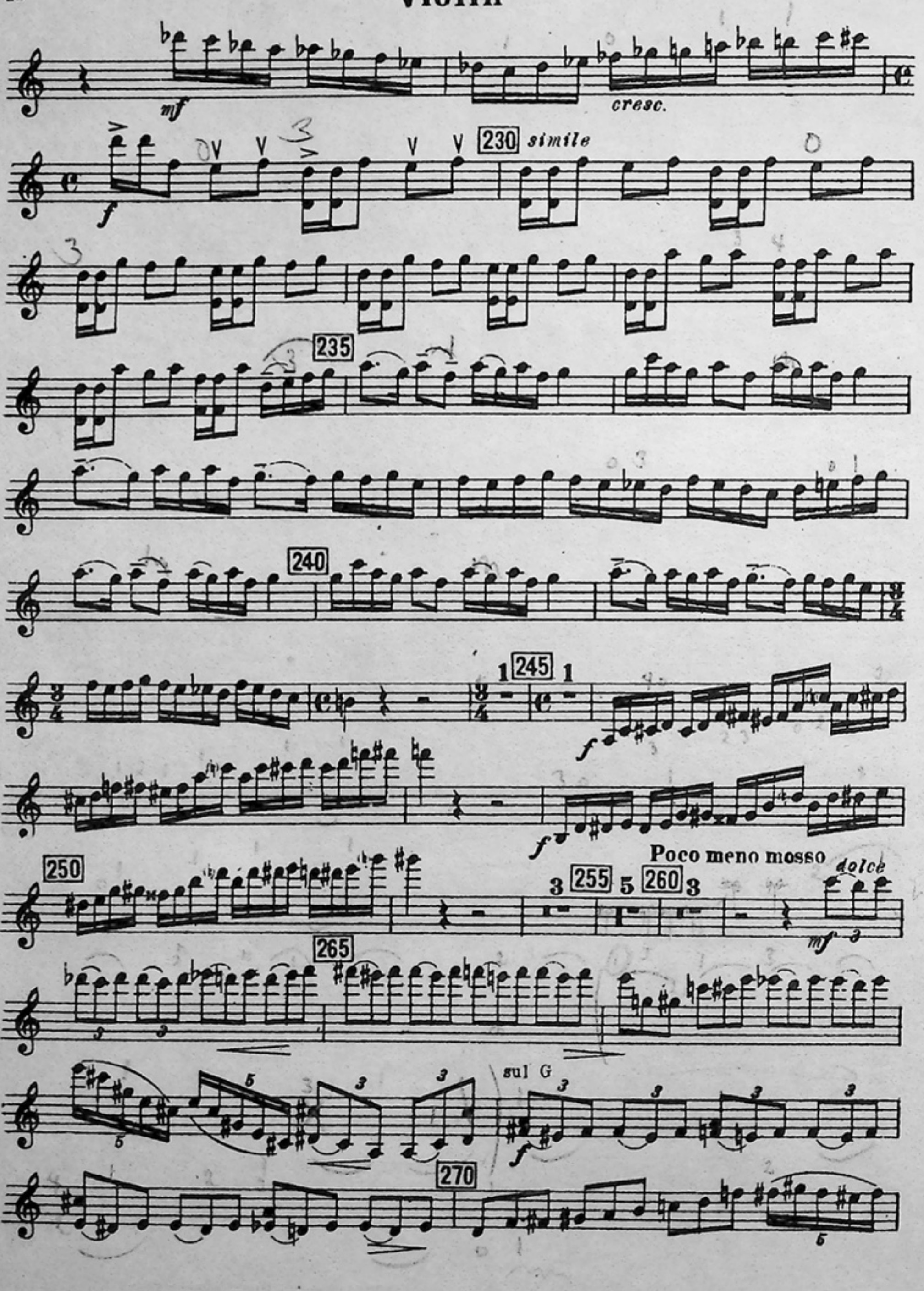

V-no Solo
poco acceler.
poco rit.
cresc.
f
acceler.
rit.
poco sosten.
(b)
acceler.
poco rit.
cresc.

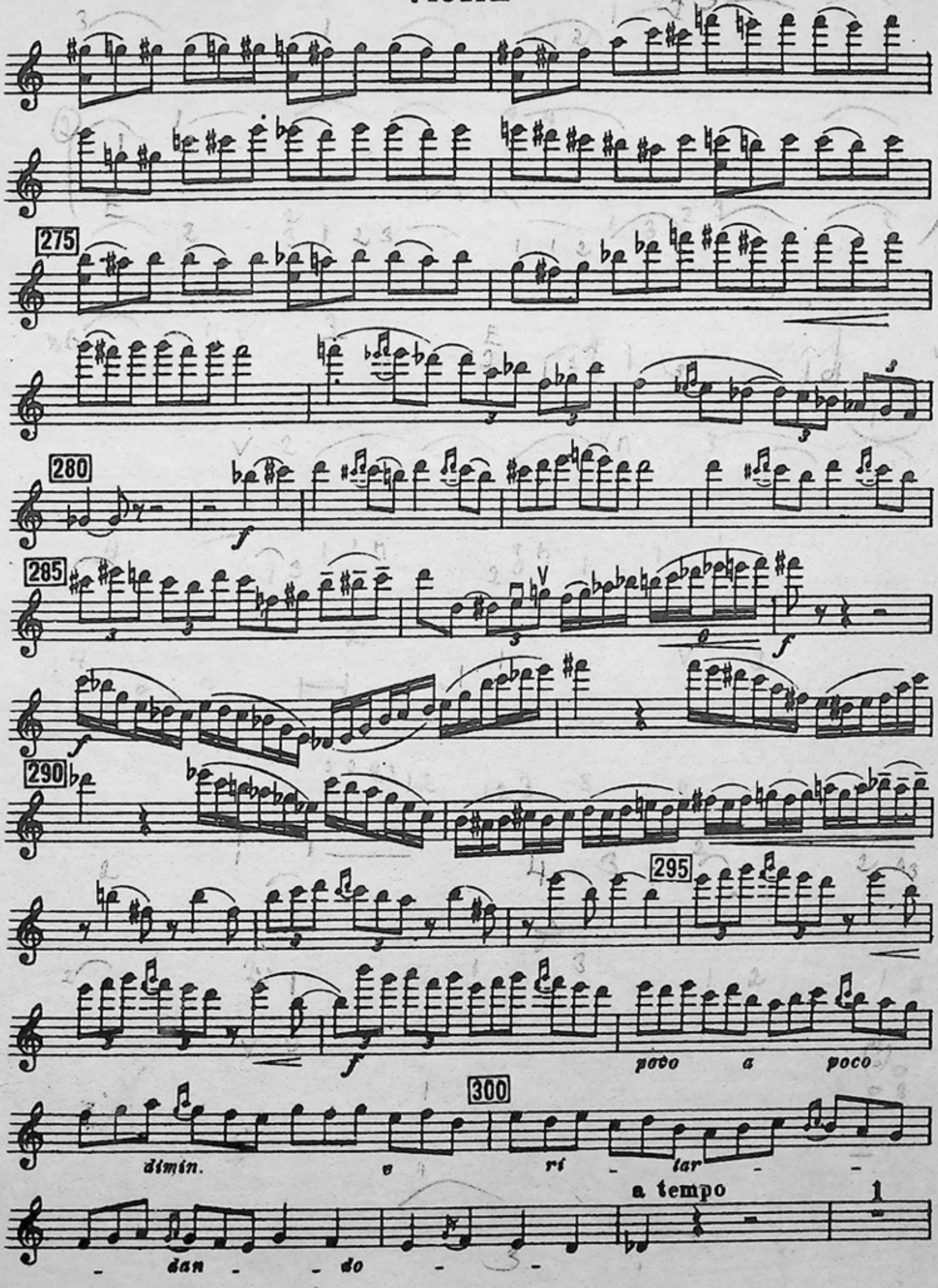

a tempo
f espr.
p
cresc
rubato
f
p
poco rit.
dim.
p
f
poco rit.
dim.

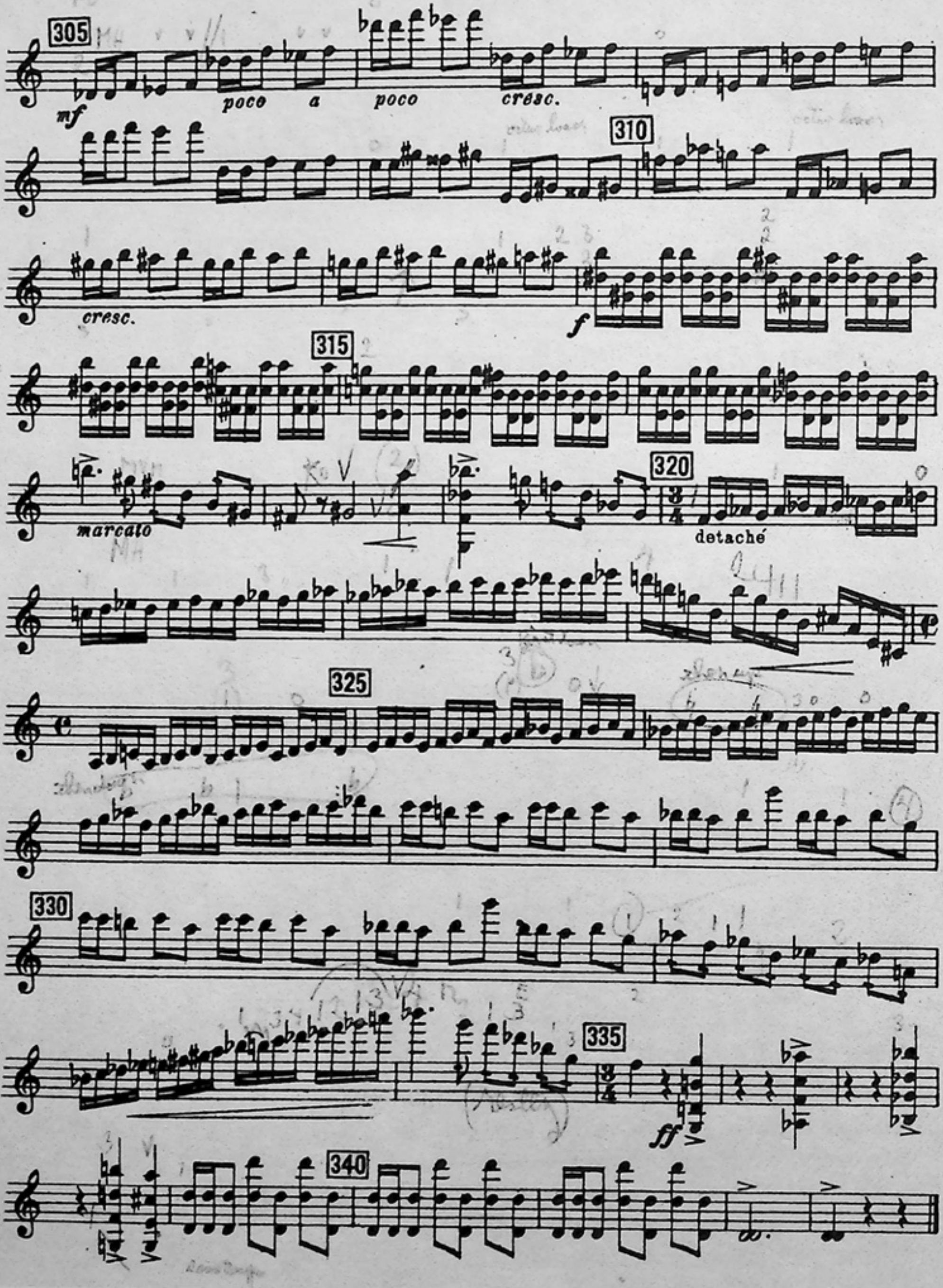


Here there are only 3 bars of ♩ 𝅗𝅥 rhythm before solo entrance

Violin


mf
cresc.
f
simile
Poco meno mosso
dolce
sul G


275
280
f
285
f
f
290
295
f
poco a poco
dimin. e ri - tar - - dan - - do - -
300
a tempo
1


305
mf
poco
a
poco
cresc.
310
cresc.
f
315
marcato
320
detaché
325
330
335
ff
340

Christine Walevska

Christine Walevska was born in Los Angeles, California; a news source indicates the year of her birth as 1945. Her mother was a violinist, and her father, Herman Walecki, a dealer in stringed instruments, gave Christine her first cello-instruction at the age of eight and a half. Previously she had received lessons in both violin and piano. During her teens, following several years of training with her father, she studied with Gregor Piatigorsky for one year. Then she entered the Paris Conservatoire, where she studied with Maurice Marechal, and was the first American to win first prize both in cello and chamber music at that institution.

Walevska has played innumerable concerts throughout the United States, Europe and Latin America, has been a featured cellist of the prestigious Hurok managerial bureau, and has been one of the few American musicians invited to perform in Castro Cuba. Her recordings on the Philips label are highly esteemed by cello enthusiasts the world over. Walevska plays on a priceless Bergonzi cello. She is married to Fred Mayer, a travel agency executive.

The artistry of Christine Walevska is a natural extension of her bravura personality. Statuesque, attractive, exuding feminine magnetism, supremely self-confident, she enters a room with a flourish and is her own best and most vociferous press agent, both in speech and performance.

It is always a delight to interview so responsive a person, and we wasted no time in getting to some of the details of Ms. Walevska's early years in music.

"My father, of course, was my prime musical influence. He himself could play all of the string instruments. I had violin and piano lessons and was especially fond of the violin, but even then I felt that the high-pitched violin was not what I really desired. When I was eight and a half, my father gave me an eighth-size Bernardel cello, and I knew I had found my true instrument. I was in seventh heaven."

"Was not so tiny an instrument rare for Bernardel?"

"Yes. It was a special cello that he made in 1832 for a countess with a very young daughter. I remember the very first week I had it. I learned a little Bach bourrée from one of the suites by rote, from watching my father play it. At that point the die was cast. I was determined to become a cellist."

"Did you have to be coerced to practice as a child?"

"I can honestly say—never. In fact, my father sometimes came into the room where I was practicing and asked if I didn't think I had practiced enough; he coaxed me to go outside and play. I didn't go to birthday parties or seek any of the usual good times the other children enjoyed. I came home immediately after school every day to practice. For me, that was a 'normal' life, and I don't regret the things I missed or a single moment of the hard work I endured. During these years, my father was a great levelling force for me. Many people were quick to label me with the term 'prodigy,' but he asked them not to do so. "Extremely talented, yes," he would say, "but not a prodigy."

Walevska sighed. "His death, a few years ago, was a crushing blow to me." She pointed to the gorgeous 1740 Carlo Bergonzi in the nearby open cello case. "Do you know, he had such firm faith in my talent, he insisted on mortgaging our home to buy it for me?" The flow of the conversation ebbed momentarily. We realized this was a painful subject for the cellist and quickly 'segued' to another point.

"Did any other musicians inspire you in your early years?"

"Yes. I would like to mention Victor Kuzdo, who was an assistant to Leopold Auer for many years and himself an outstanding pedagogue. I used to play for him frequently, and he helped me enormously. He would say banteringly, 'Christine, did you bring your joy box today?' I also owe much to several of the conductors I met in later years who helped me in my career, particularly Dean Dixon, who asked me to open the Frankfort concert season in 1962. From that I was able to secure my first concert tour which included 45 engagements."

"When was your first important public performance?"

Walevska thought for a moment. "I played the Saint-Saens Concerto with the Santa Barbara, California orchestra when I was thirteen. Not too long after that I came to the attention of Gregor Piatigorsky and became his first private pupil. Naturally, being in the company of so great a cellist and personality had a beneficial effect upon my musical development. However, we did have some differences on the question of repertoire. For instance, he thought I was much too young at 15 to play 'Schelomo.' He would say, in that marvelous deep basso with the inimitable Russian accent— 'Schelomo? No! you haf to vait until youfed liffed. Before you're 25 you von't be able to play 'Schelomo.' "But I had already prepared 'Schelomo' for him to hear."

Walevska presents Dr. Applebaum with her copy of Bloch's "Schelomo" for inclusion in this book.

Apparently, Piatigorsky changed his views in later years, since quite a few of his students were permitted to play 'Schelomo' in their teen years. In any event, Walevska recorded 'Schelomo' for international distribution well before she was 25, and it is widely acclaimed as an exceptional performance.

She continued. "My study with Piatigorsky often lacked continuity and the kind of regularity I felt I needed, so when I was 16, my parents agreed that I should go to Paris and enter the Conservatoire. It was a big decision, one that changed my entire life.

"It wasn't easy for my parents to send me off to a strange country at such a tender age, and I can only be grateful for their foresight and their confidence in me. Once at the Conservatoire I worked with Maurice Marechal, whom I considered my principal teacher. By the time I was 18, I was already a veteran of several concert tours, mostly in South America."

"Did you travel around South America all by yourself?"

"Yes. The people were all helpful and most cordial to me. But soon after, when I started to tour Europe, this was not the case. I became so lonely that I asked my father to come over and travel with me."

We asked Walevska to give us some of her thoughts on practical cello techniques.

"I feel that one of the greatest detriments to the development of velocity and a beautiful tone is the use of too much left-hand finger pressure. There should be only enough finger pressure to clearly articulate the note. Never more. It should be a very natural type of pressure. This also enables the cellist to eliminate much fatigue. Just think of the tremendous fingerboard leaps we often have to make, as compared to the violin! Less finger pressure can help the player move quickly and with greater flexibility from one position to another.

"As far as the vibrato is concerned, here, too, there should be a minimum of tension in the left arm, with a very natural finger pressure on the string. To be consistently beautiful, the vibrato must vary in speed, slower in the low registers, faster in the high ones. Cellists must be constantly aware that the cello is basically a singing instrument with as many different colors of sound as a musical rainbow. The bow, of course, must produce a tone that is suave and elegant. To do this, the player must first hear the sound he wants in his mind. Too often cellists lack a perfect cantilena

Walevska—in glamorous perspective.

sound. They get into a habit of pumping the bow, which produces a distracting 'hairpin' of sound that upsets smoothness of connection and line. The cello tone must emulate the lyric fluency of a great singer. I do believe, though, that cello playing in general has been making big strides. Solo cello concerts seem to be rising in popularity, and standards of performance are steadily improving."

"Ms. Walevska, you have travelled so extensively, you must have had some unusual experiences. Would you tell us about some of these?"

"Yes, I have many stories that I think are interesting. Let me see." She paused. "There was my first concert in Buenos Aires. I arrived a week early in order to get a feeling of the musical climate and learned that the audiences were quite knowledgeable and sophisticated. I was very young and didn't know quite what to expect. I've never been really nervous before a concert, but I had a heightened sense of anticipation. I thought, oh dear, what is this going to be like? I was backstage warming up. There were three loud knocks on the dressing room door. It was a man in uniform telling me it was time to play. I walked onstage. The place was jampacked. I was overwhelmed. It was all so inspiring that one couldn't help but play magnificently. The next time I played, people lined up at five in the morning to buy tickets."

"Please continue."

"Well, one of the most touching incidents was at a concert in Poland where I was given carnations and oranges by appreciative fans. You know, in Poland, oranges are an expensive imported delicacy, and carnations in winter can cost up to 25 dollars a flower. It makes you realize how great a role music plays in the lives of these people.

"However, my most ominous experiences were in Lima, Peru. I had the misfortune to receive an engagement which happened to be scheduled while a revolutionary situation was in progress. On the way to the hall, a police barricade halted my cab. I got out, all bedecked in my long white gown, kept a tight grip on my cello case and bribed a solider to let me through the police lines. Then I walked the several blocks to the theater, which was at the very center of Peruvian political activity. I got into the hall and started to warm up in a back room. Suddenly, the manager appeared and told me the 'good news'—the concert was cancelled. The American

Walevska playing the Tchaikovsky "Rococco Variations" for Applebaum in her home in New York.

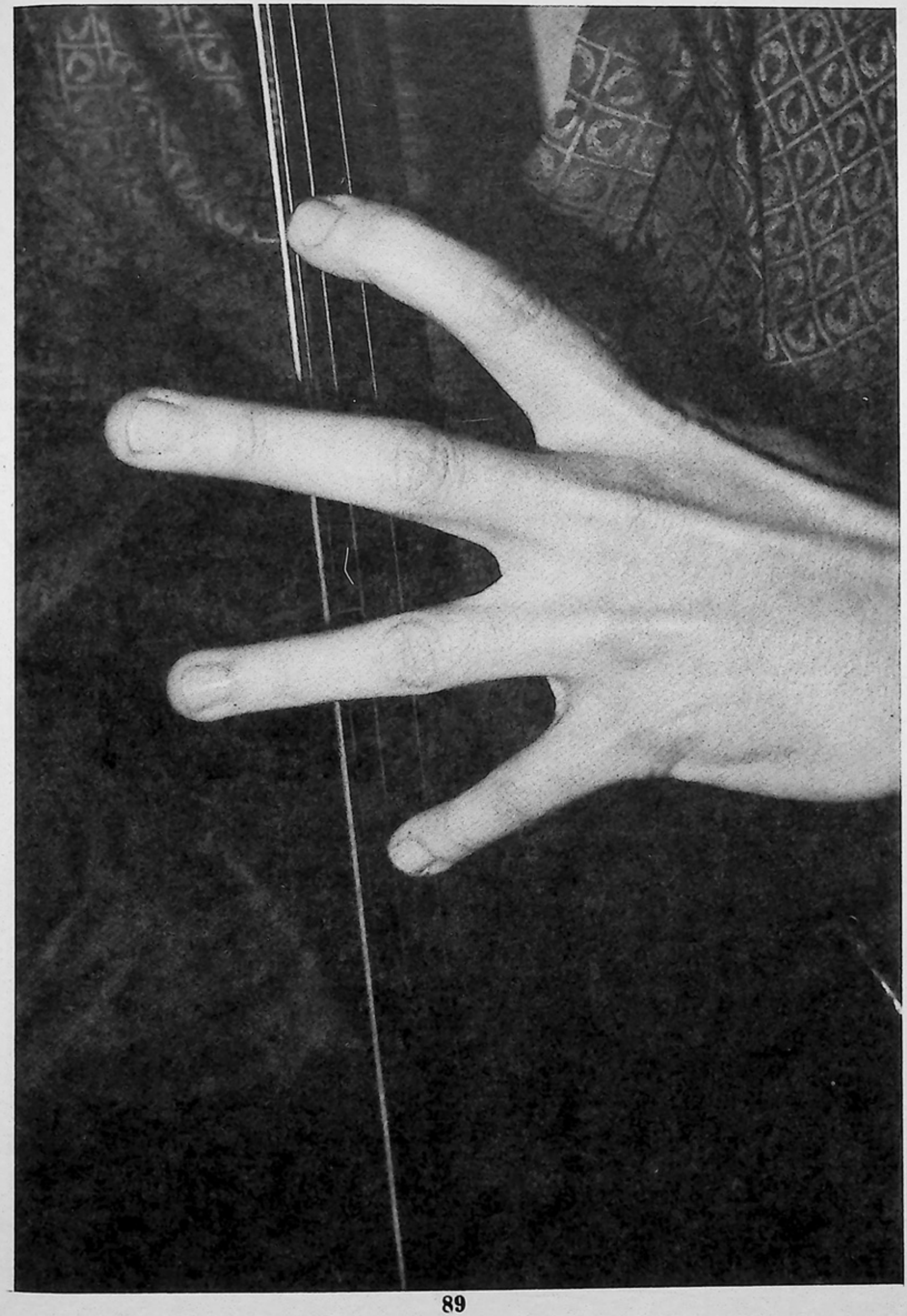
cultural attache advised me to 'get out of there—quick.' But I wasn't about to do that, not when there were about 200 people who had braved the slings and arrows of political strife to hear me play the cello.

"I played two Bach Solo Cello Suites. My accompanist had not made it through the lines, and an exceedingly prissy character volunteered to play a Beethoven Sonata with me. He played atrociously. In the first piano solo section, I sat there practically mesmerized, listening to the notes 'fall on the floor.' Then, with the most incredible gall I ever encountered, he stopped, turned to me and said in a loud voice—'do you know where you're at?' I could scarcely believe my ears! But I managed to survive both the concert and the revolution. It was a disconcerting but enlightening adventure for me.

We realized that among other things, Walevska was a veritable mother lode of anecdotes, and we urged her to continue for a while in similar vein. She required no coaxing. The cellist went on. "I think I should mention what was perhaps the most moving experience of my musical life. It happened in Prague, where I was the only American soloist to be invited to play in that year's Spring Festival. I was engaged to play the Dvorak Concerto. There I was, at the very fountainhead of the Bohemian spirit, playing this magnificent concerto with musicians who revere it with all their hearts. For me, it was awe-inspiring. During the performance there was none of the tug-of-war that so often occurs in soloist-orchestra relationships—who should play softer, who louder. We played as one, in total rapport, technically and spiritually. I have never performed so exalted a Dvorak, before or since."

One of the few American musicians to be invited to Castro Cuba, Walevska's visit had been widely publicized in the American press. Since her impressions of present-day Cuba and its leader had been so exceptionally positive, we asked her to relate them to us. She had spent several days touring Cuba and was deeply affected by what she had seen. According to her report, Cuba is a country where there are no class differences and no downright

Walevska's flexible left hand in a stretch position.



poverty, where luxuries like concert tickets are available to all, and people are sweetness personified, very loving and affectionate in approach."

Walevska's invitation to Cuba came at the recommendation of the Cuban Ambassador to Peru, who had heard her concert in Lima.

"It turned into the most exciting event in all my tours. I was given the red carpet treatment. Havana is a very clean and beautiful city, and my concert there was enthusiastically acclaimed. Then I was taken to the provinces where I was received everywhere by welcoming committees who showered me with flowers. The countryside scenery was captivating; the combination of tropical breezes, swaying palm trees and beguiling guitar music was quite irrestistible. I didn't want to leave.

"I played the Dvorak concerto with the Havana Symphony which plays well. The Vice Prime Minister attended, but Castro was unable to come. We repeated the performance for videotaping. Next day I had a bad cold and was dog-tired from my travels. It was midnight and I was going to bed, drowsy with antihistamines. The phone rang. 'This is the office of the Prime Minister,' said the voice on the other end. 'El Comandante en Jefe would like to visit you in 10 minutes.

"At first I thought it might be a joke, but groggy as I was, I managed to make myself presentable. Sure enough, at precisely 12:10 A.M. there were three knocks on the hotel room door. It was Castro, handsome in his green army uniform. Behind him, the corridor was filled with soldiers. He and an aide entered the room, and I can assure you, by this time I was fully awake."

"What did you talk about," we asked.

"Everything under the sun, for four hours—politics, music, relations between our countries. It was a tremendous experience for me. I found him highly intelligent. He is a doctor of law, you know. His voice is soft and velvety, his nose is incredibly masculine and attractive, his eyes are warm and affectionate and his hands look as if he had never done any manual labor. And I must say, he was the perfect gentleman. We spoke in Spanish."

"As far as vibrato is concerned . . . there should be a minimum of tension in the left arm, with a very natural finger pressure on the string."

Walevska preferred not to discuss their political discussion about which she made personal notes on the back cover of a Sonatina by J. Ardeval, while Castro talked and puffed away at a cigar.

"He had apologized for coming at such an hour, but said it was the only time he could see me. He asked me to play, and I did some things by Chopin and Dvorak. My cello interested him very much. He examined it carefully and questioned me at length about the secrets of Cremona master instruments. To tell you the truth, I was thrilled by the whole affair and felt like a special international ambassador of good will."

We could easily understand her excitement. It would be a memorable affair for any artist.

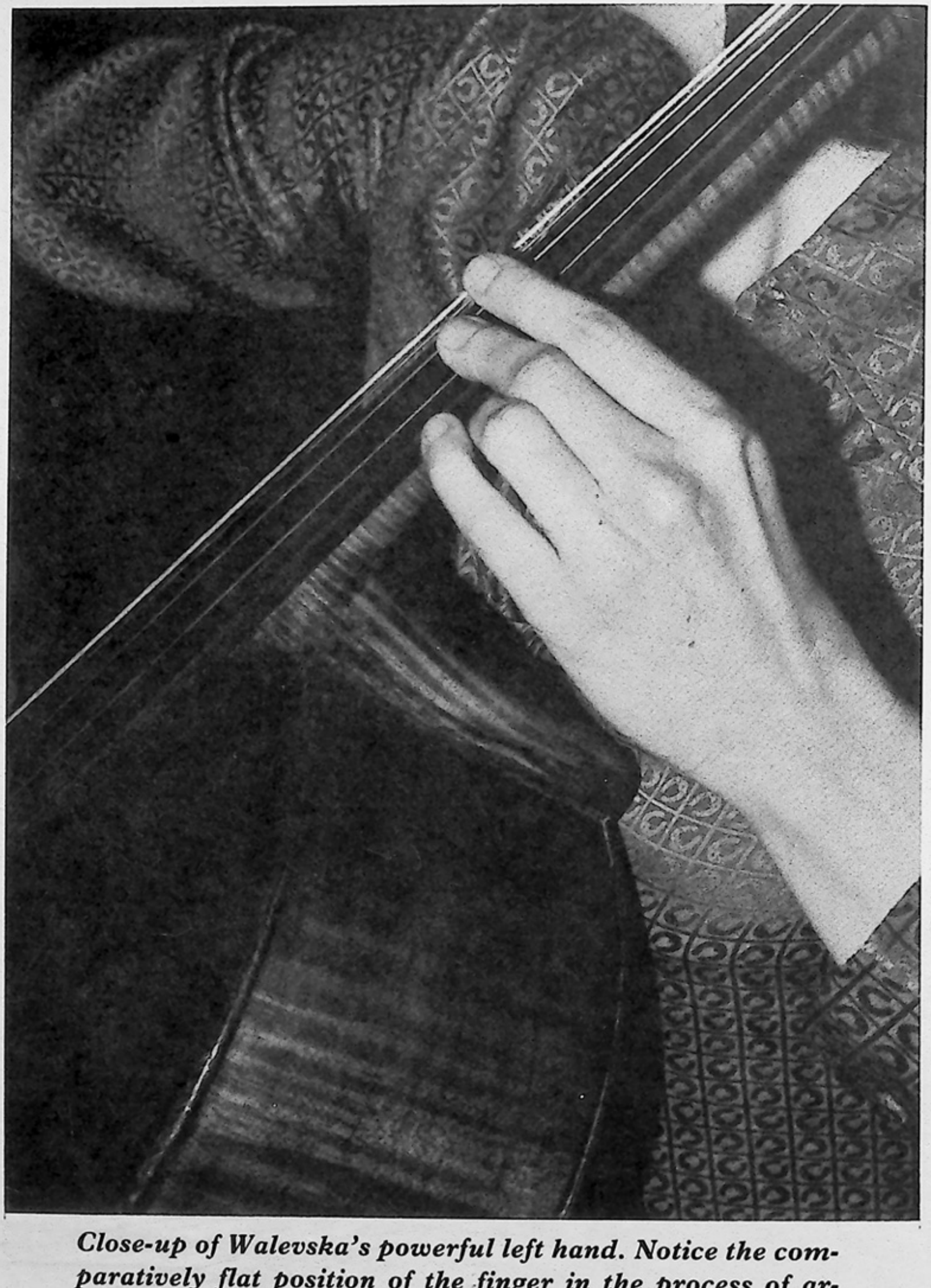
Walevska had agreed to give us a comprehensive analysis of her performance of Bloch's 'Schelomo,' a work she plays with both fire and poetry, together with a copy of her cello part with the fingerings and bowings she prefers. (G. Schirmer edition, 1918, U.S.A.). She began.

"How beautifully Bloch expresses his thoughts," mused Walevska. "O.K. let's get started. 'Schelomo' opens Lento Moderato with a diminuendo, a crescendo and a tenuto, right in the first bar." We asked if this did not pose a ticklish technical problem.

"It does. I begin the note by placing my finger on the harmonic and playing downbow, with a slight attack in a piano mezzo-forte. Many cellists start it upbow. As my bow moves, I slowly begin to press my finger from the harmonic to the actual note, without vibrato; then I gradually introduce the vibrato and build finger intensity as I crescendo toward the middle of the bow.

"I then diminuendo to the end of the nine-eight measure. Note what I do in the second bar." She demonstrated. "In the middle of the bar, on the F-sharp, there are two ways I do this. Both are good; it depends on my mood. When I strike the D I can go from the first finger on the D to a third, then slide back to the fourth finger on the D, or I can go from the D to the E with the first

"You see, I consider the cello as the instrument closest to the human voice."



Close-up of Walevska's powerful left hand. Notice the comparatively flat position of the finger in the process of articulation.

Walevska plays with rapt concentration.

finger, playing an harmonic on the next D and then come back on the D string."

"We notice you have two sets of fingerings marked. Which do you prefer?"

"I think the one on the A string. I end up on the A in bar three, then come down on the C-string and make that luscious connection between the D and the A coming up on the G, crossing over, with a slight glissando into the top D.

"Now, on the Piu Animato, I suggest the listener never be aware of actual glissandi except in a few special places. *It's what is between the notes that primarily interests me.* So whenever I've marked three-to-three, for instance, it's because I want a slight glissando there. Every fingering I mark has a purpose in musical phrasing.

"The two notes leading into bar 13 should be stressed, with a juicy glissando on the first two notes of bar 13."

"Do you make a slight break between those notes of which the first is underlined with a dash?"

"No, I prefer not to."

"Do you enunciate the notes just before the animando?"

"Within the bow, yes. All such breath marks increase the intensity and passion. At bar 16 when we hit the high D, it is a glorious climax."

"Do you overtly change mood at bar 25?"

"Yes, I enter softly as if I were part of the orchestra, and increase to a mezzo-forte dolce. And in bar 28, the three-quarter bar, these are graceful, wave-like articulations." She sang, to illustrate.

"You make a slight glissando to the beginning of each beat?"

"Yes. To each dotted eighth-note except the last. Now in bar 30, Bloch put tenuto marks over every note, and that's exactly the way I feel they should be played. And in bar 35, the poignant, tearful element should be emphasized. Often, the 16th-notes are played too shortly and in a flippant manner."

"But you do accent the dotted eighth-notes?"

"Of course, but the emphasis on the 16ths adds tremendous power. Going ahead, at bar 42 I do it as if it were in one position. No obvious change of finger, just a graceful coming into the note. From bar 46 to 52 we start to build a climax. This can be a hazardous passage. Sometimes the orchestra gets over-excited, anticipates your crescendo and becomes overpowering."

«SCHELOMO»

Walewska

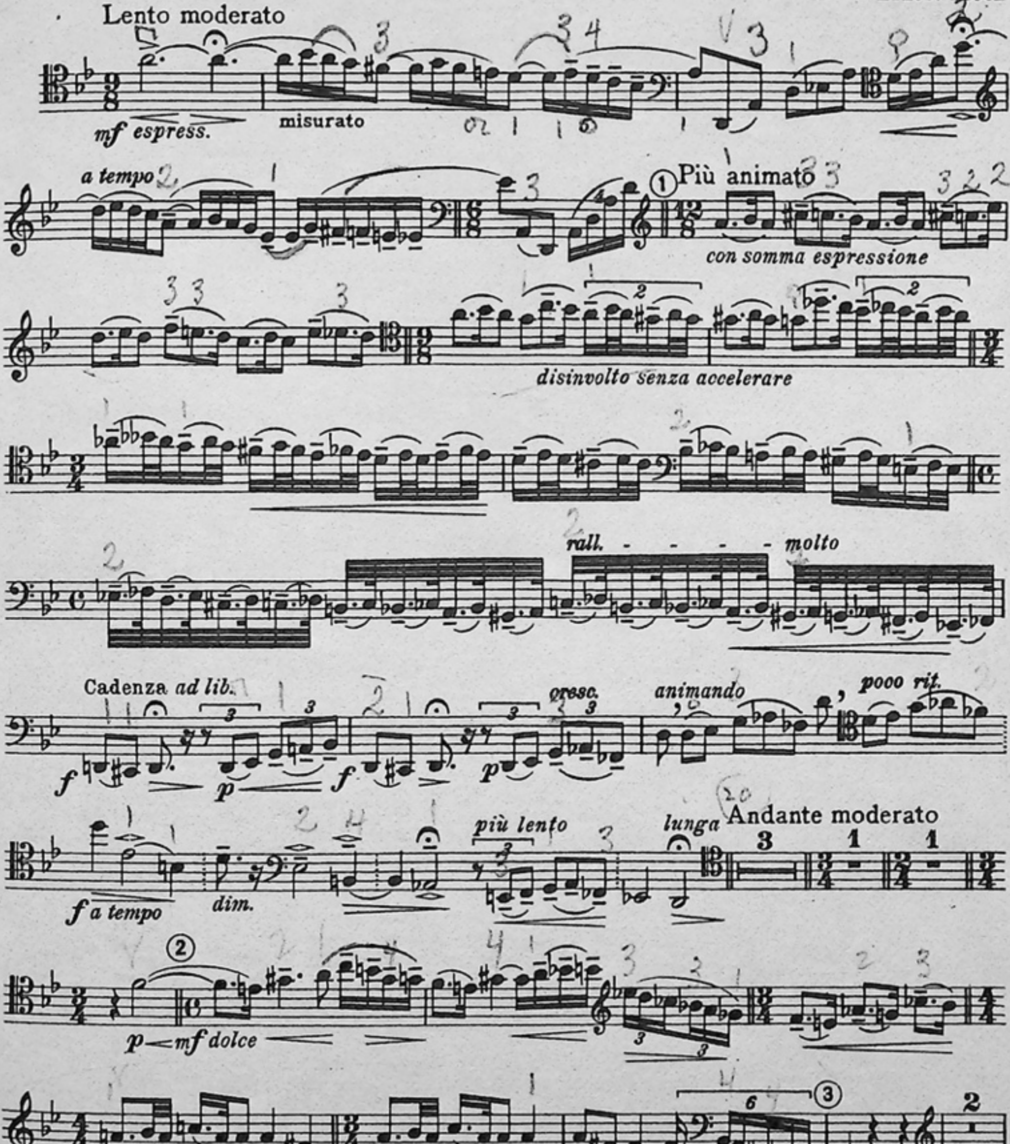
Rhapsodie hébraïque

pour

Violoncelle solo et Grand Orchestre

Violoncello Solo

Ernest Bloch



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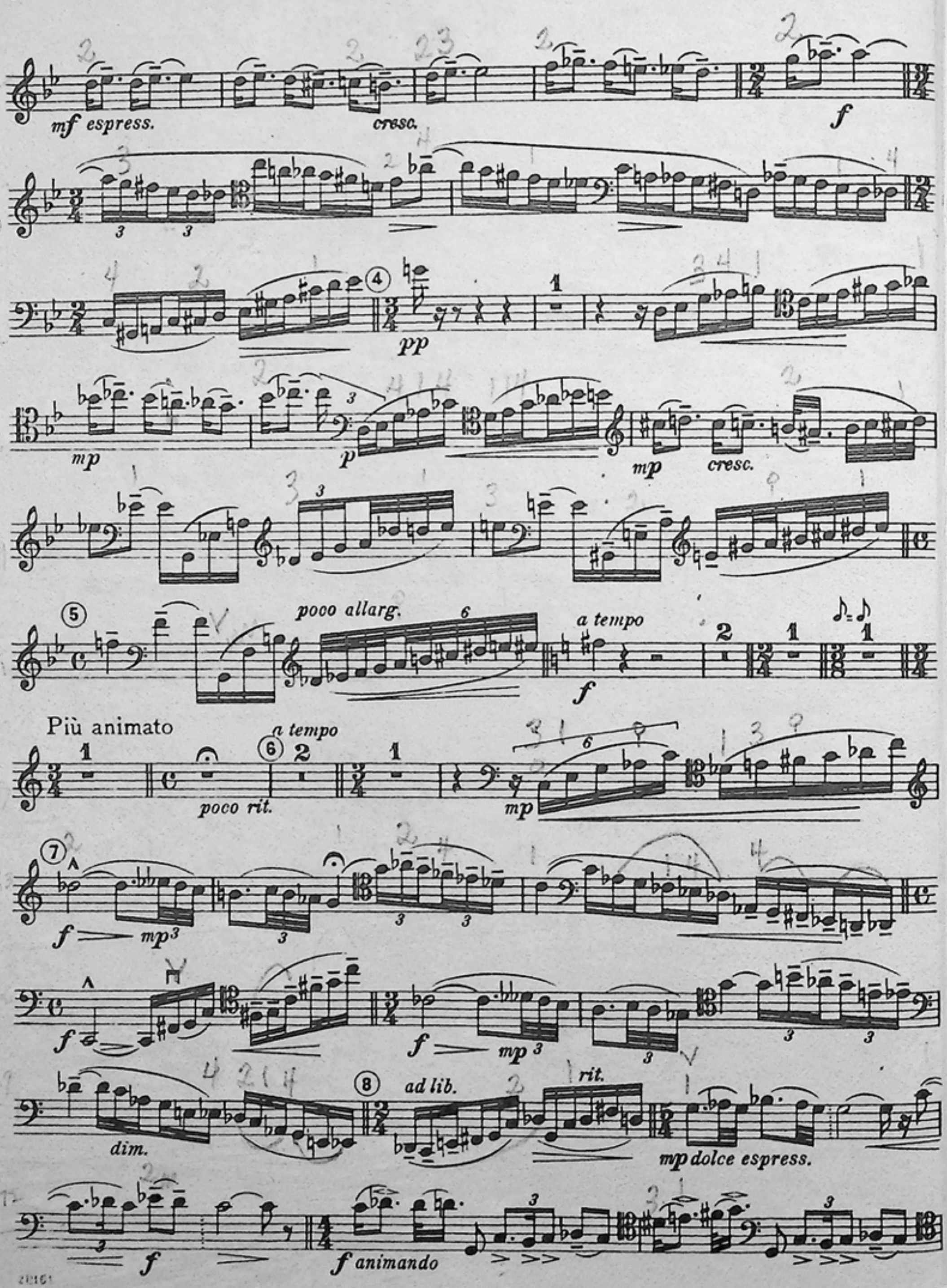
mf espress.
cresc.
f
3
pp
④
1
mp
p
mp
cresc.
⑤
poco allarg.
6
a tempo
f
2
1
Più animato
poco rit.
⑥ a tempo
2
1
mp
⑦
f
mp
f
mp
⑧ ad lib.
rit.
dim.
mp dolce espress.
f
f animando
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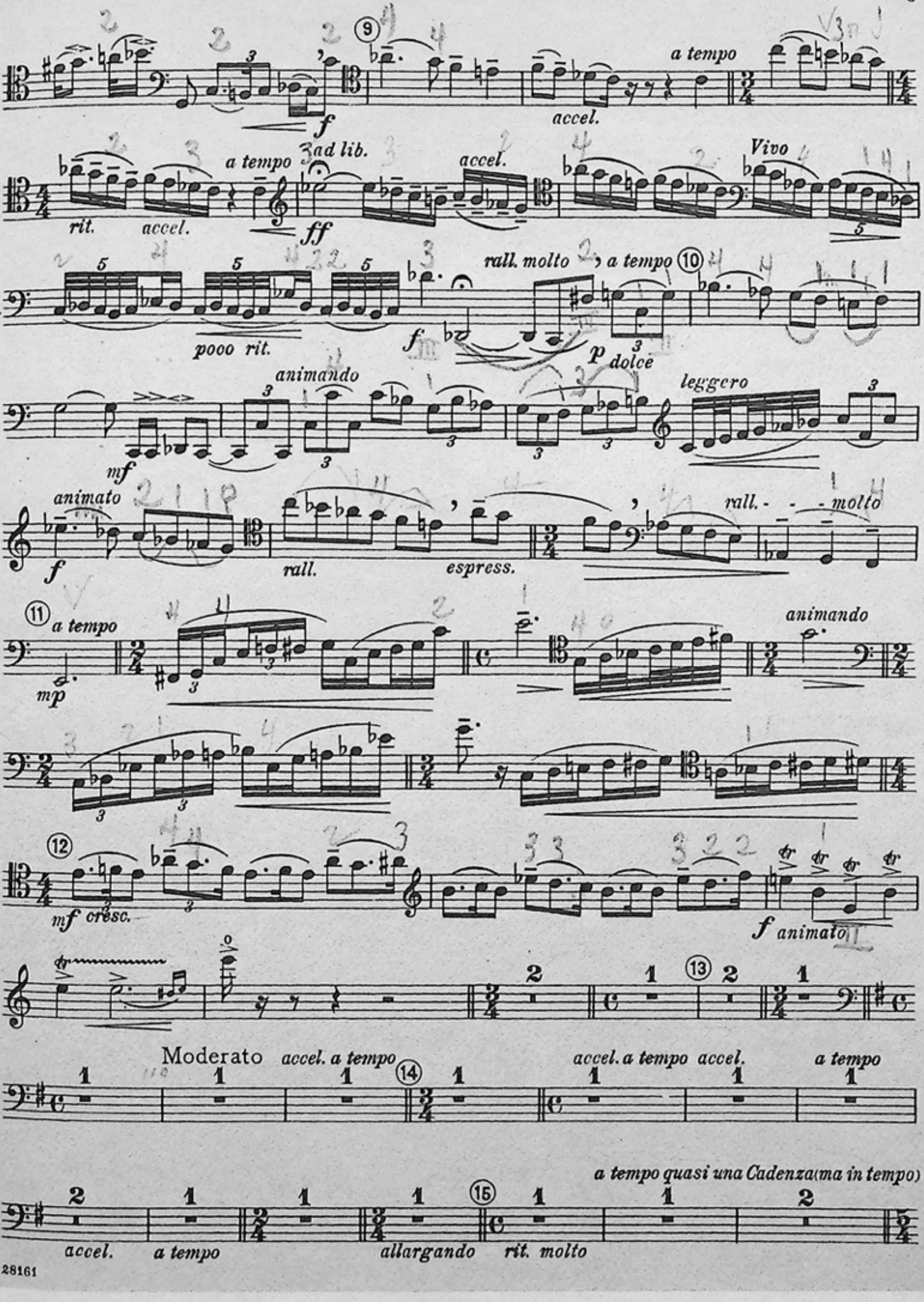
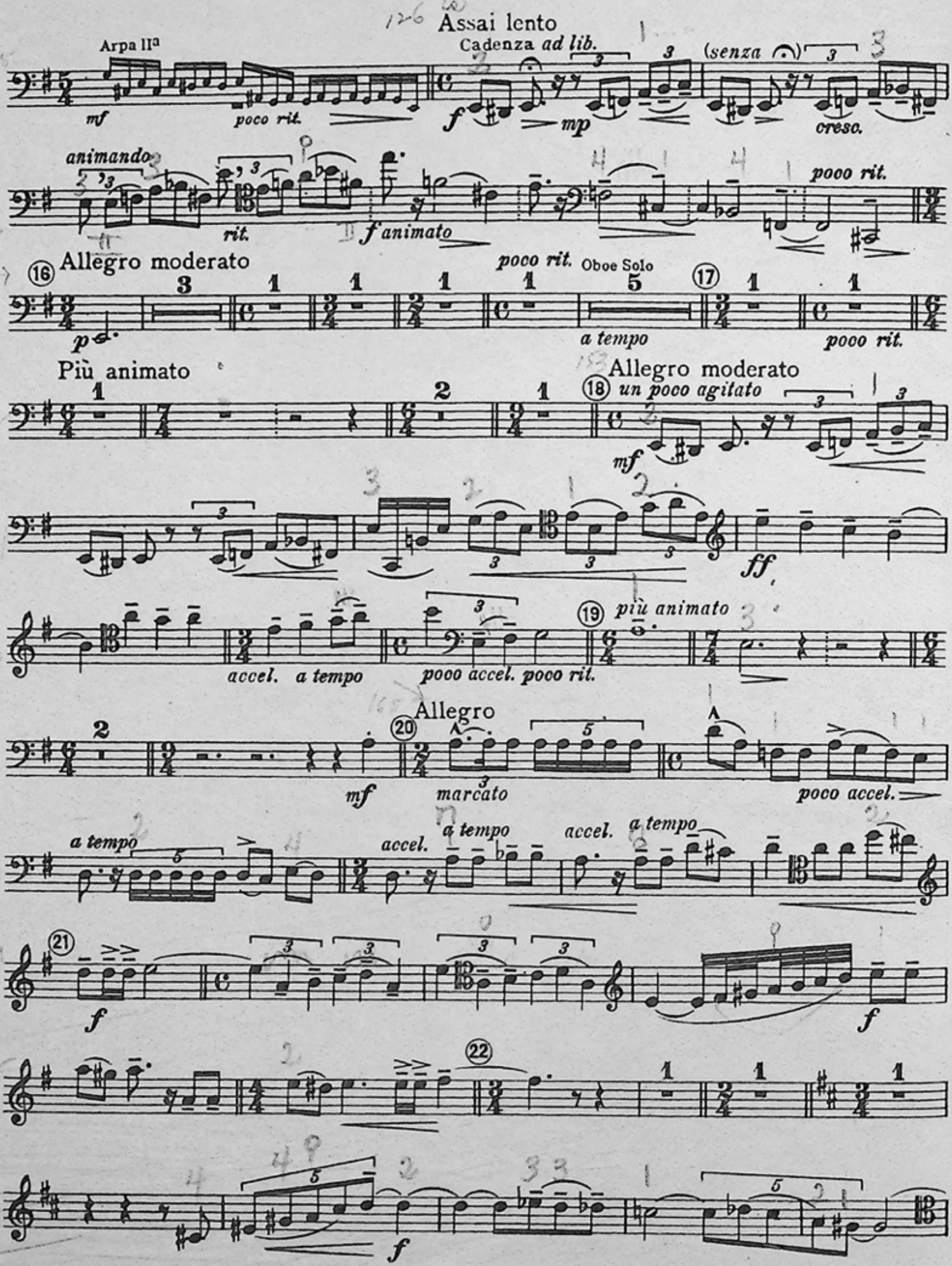
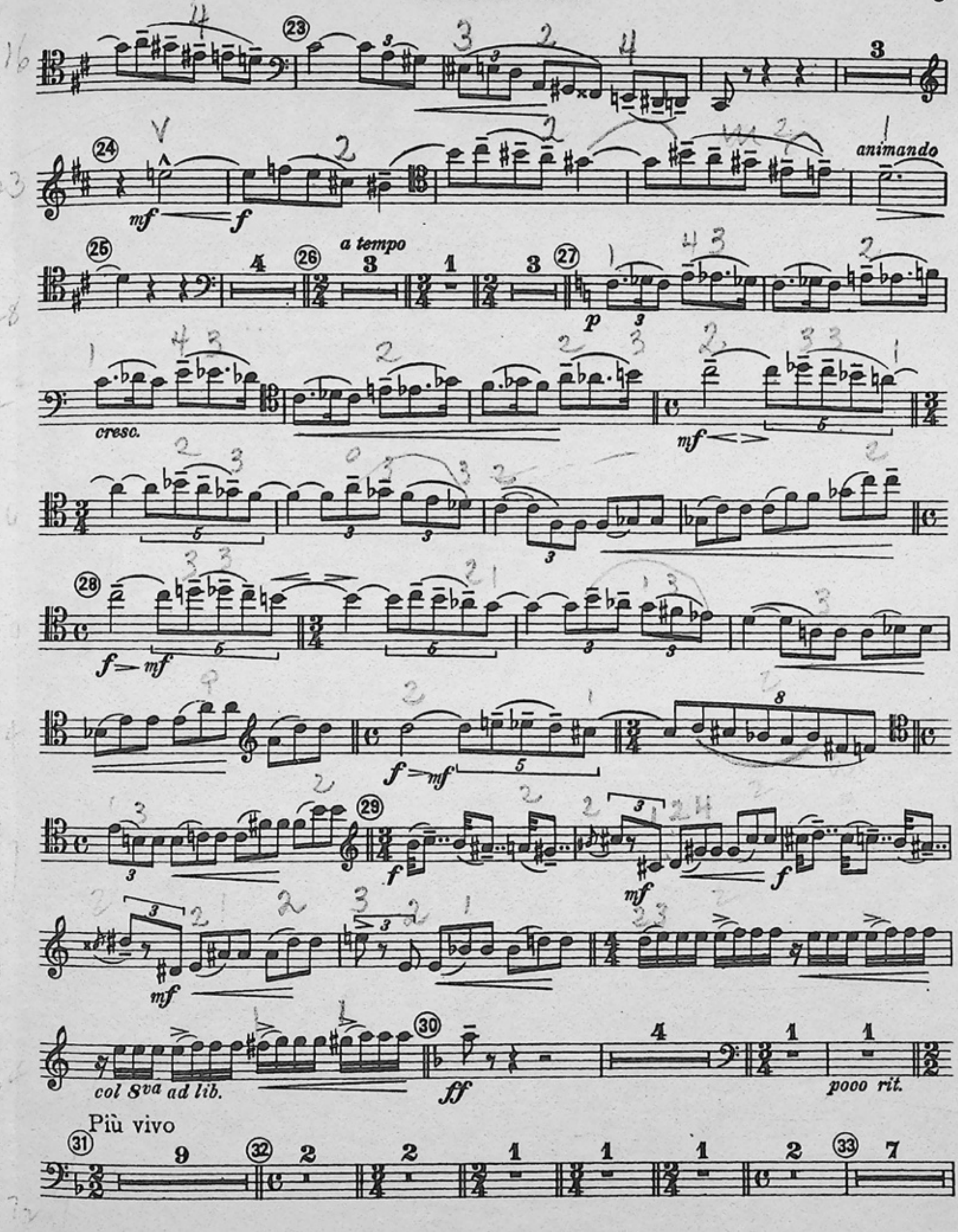
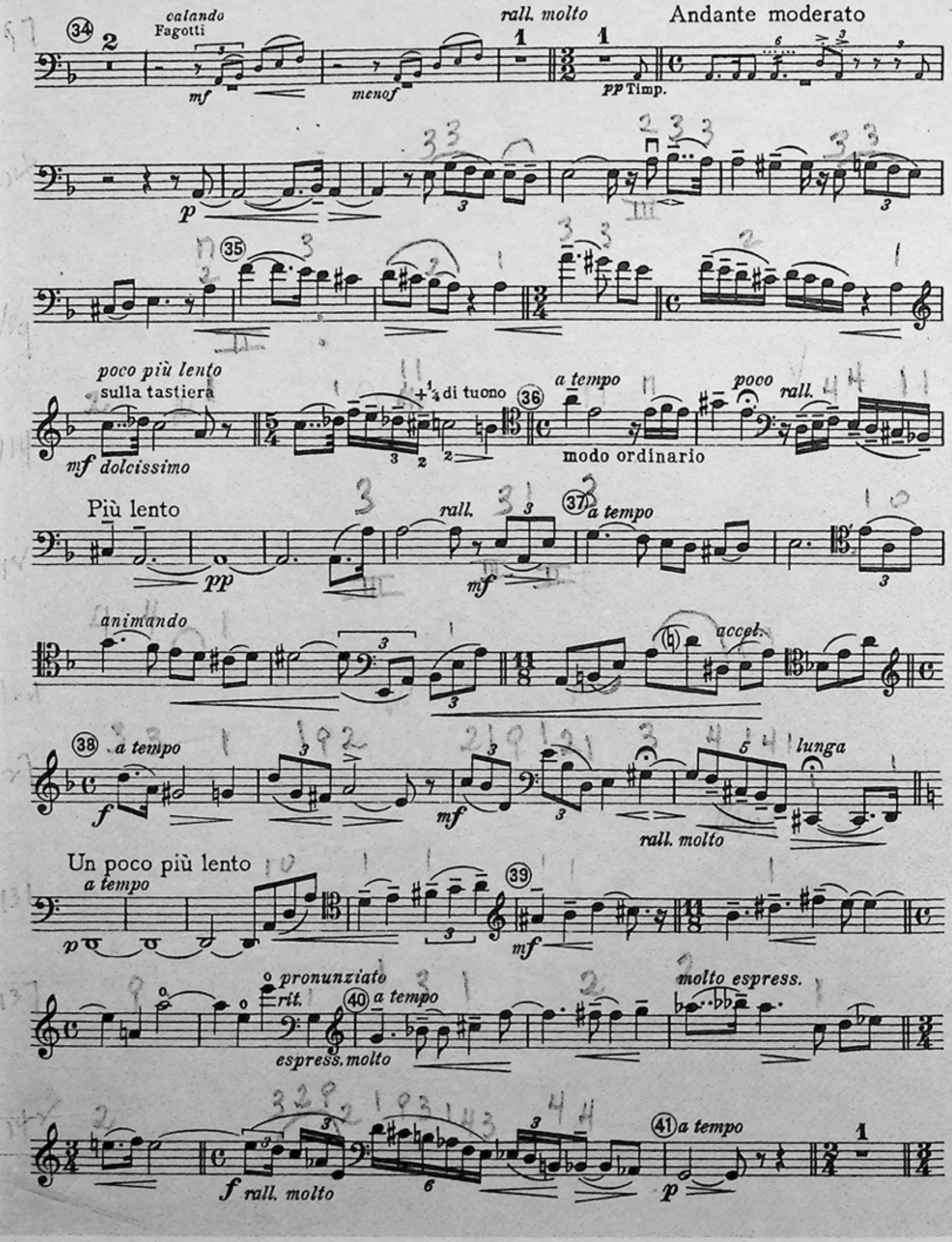
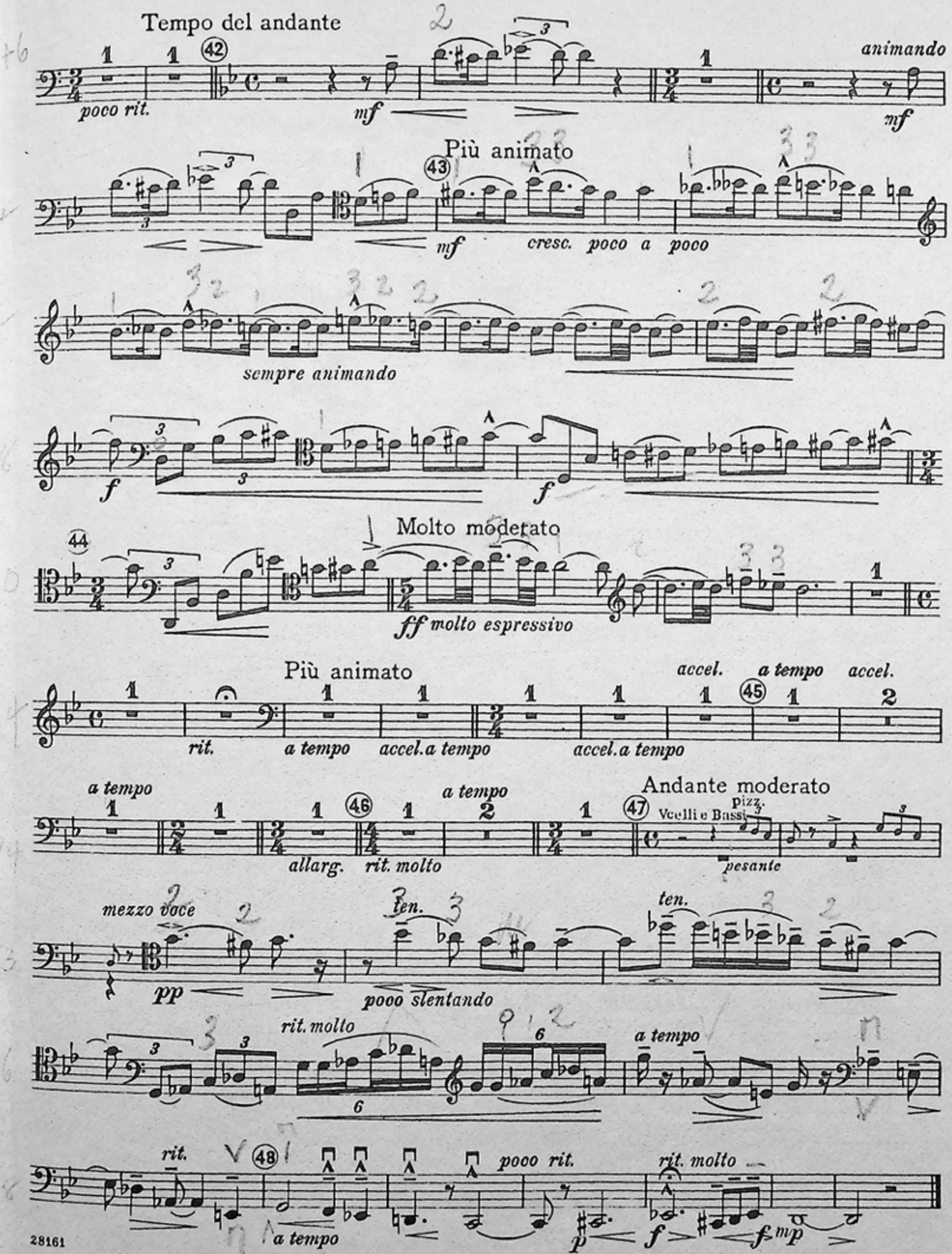

a tempo
accel.
rit.
accel.
a tempo
ad lib.
ff
accel.
Vivo
poco rit.
rall. molto
a tempo
p dolce
animando
mf
leggero
animato
f
rall.
espress.
rall. - - - molto
a tempo
mp
animando
mf cresc.
f animato
Moderato
accel. a tempo
accel. a tempo accel.
a tempo
a tempo quasi una Cadenza (ma in tempo)
accel.
a tempo
allargando
rit. molto
⑨
⑩
⑪
⑫
⑬
⑭
⑮

Violoncello Solo




23
24
mf
f
animando
25
26
a tempo
27
p
cresc.
mf
28
f
mf
29
f
mf
col 8va ad lib.
30
ff
poco rit.
Più vivo
31
32
33


㉞
calando
Fagotti
mf
menof
rall. molto
pp Timp.
Andante moderato
p
㉟
poco più lento
sulla tastiera
mf dolcissimo
+¼ di tuono
㊱
a tempo
modo ordinario
poco
rall.
Più lento
pp
rall.
mf
㊲
a tempo
animando
accel.
㊳
a tempo
f
mf
rall. molto
lunga
Un poco più lento
a tempo
p
㊴
mf
pronunziato
rit.
espress. molto
㊵
a tempo
molto espress.
f rall. molto
㊶
a tempo
p


Tempo del andante
poco rit.
42
mf
animando
mf
Più animato
43
mf
cresc. poco a poco
sempre animando
f
f
Molto moderato
44
ff molto espressivo
Più animato
rit.
a tempo
accel. a tempo
accel. a tempo
accel.
a tempo
accel.
45
a tempo
allarg.
46
rit. molto
a tempo
Andante moderato
47
Vcelli e Bassi
pizz.
pesante
mezzo voce
pp
ten.
poco slentando
ten.
rit. molto
a tempo
rit.
48
a tempo
poco rit.
p
f
rit. molto
f
mp

"Isn't there always a tendency for the orchestra to be too loud?"

"Right, and especially in this section. Now, in bar 62 I use the thumb position so that the listener is not distracted by hearing mechanical finger changes. There is a slight glissando from the last note of 62 into 63; it should sound like a graceful wave rolling into the note. Bar 64 is a quiet, intimate passage."

"It sounded rather cadenza-like in your recording."

"Yes. Fortunately Bloch stresses the rhapsodic in 'Schelomo,' and I take advantage of this whenever I feel it is in good taste."

"The freedom you took was almost like a fantasia."

"Yes. And you can note that at bar 70 he has even written 'ad libito.' At 76 again I advocate a slight glissando to produce soulfulness. Without this it wouldn't sound nearly as idiomatic. As I build up various passages from 70 to 78, all the 16th and 32nd notes in the animando should be played as if they were in one position, and my fingerings facilitate that.

"Bar 82 is the great climatic double-forte to which we have been building, so I bow the E-flat as slowly as possible with full strength, as if held forever, with no let-up of power. This is one of my favorite passages. Most cellists go from the G-string, making a slide into the D-string on the D-flat, but I prefer the more daring and passionate approach, and play that D-flat on the G-string."

"That certainly is audacious, but boldness is one of the salient features of your playing."

"Thank you. You know I love to play in a daring way. For example, how often we hear the Haydn D-Major concerto with the cellist continually crossing from the D to the A-string in a most conservative manner, because it is safer. But I prefer to go up on the same string to produce a wider range of tone color. In fact, I recommend certain exercises for the development of foolproof fingerboard leaps. If one practices one-string octaves from a low position to the higher octave, there are many ways of doing it. All can be beneficial. First make the position change from the first to the third finger, both with a clean solid leap, then with a glissando

Walevska displays her sizable stretch. Note the broad cushions of the finger pads.

change, but not over-greasy.' Practice these changes with all fingers, carefully, including the thumb.

"There is another thing. Remember the very first note of 'Schelomo?' It is awfully tricky and requires tremendous finger and bow control. It starts with absolute purity and intensifies to maximum emotional projection. Now, I know pupils are constantly told to practice long bows. But I suggest this. Start with a pianissimo bow. Move the bow slowly while increasing to a very rich, sonorous tone that is not tight or cramped. Then, when at the tip, double-forte, go upbow, diminishing vibrance and sonority to the frog. Daily work of this kind develops fine tone control.

"Very fruitful advice. Where are we now?"

"Let's proceed to bar 91, where it is mezzo-piano. Again we start to build. Hopefully the orchestra does not become so loud that you can't hear what's going on in the cello. All of these crescendos within the measure as in bar 97, help to balance matters. The last beat of 95 should be played very cleanly, and in 96, the diminuendo should be less soft than in 192."

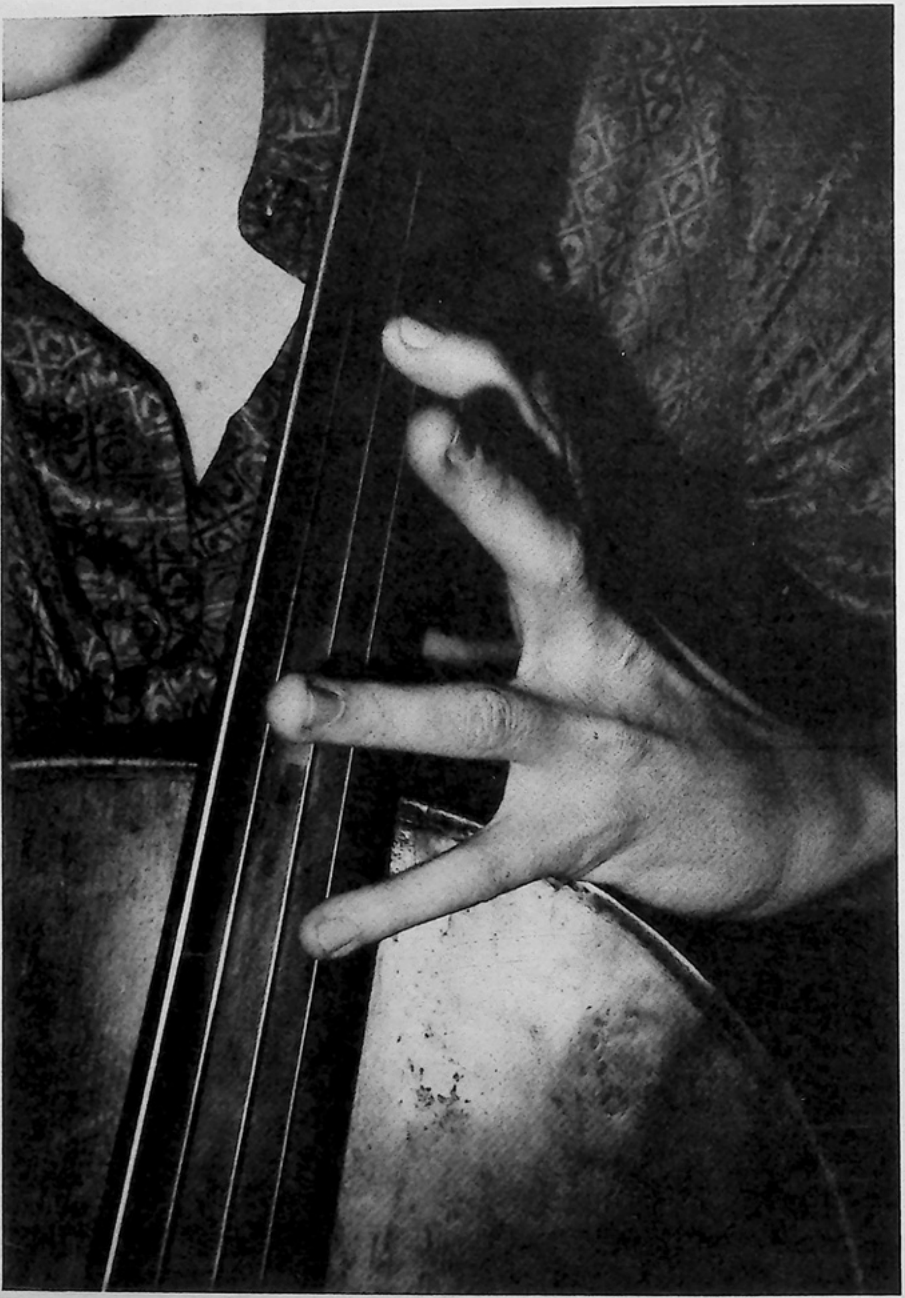
"How do you handle the trills at bars 101 and 102?"

"Bloch himself marked accents on these trills, and I bring these out in my recording quite strongly. Now we come to the cadenza ad libitum, Assai Lento, in bar 127. This can be an exquisite moment for the cello because of the sumptuous C-string register. Note that he specifically puts a hold over that dotted eighth-note, but in 128 he puts senza. This senza must be played without license. The first E can be 'milked' deliciously because it has a tenuto-then diminuendo. But in 128, there is no hold over the E, though some players, incorrectly, hold it. The breaths in the animando at 129 are important because they impart an agitato feeling."

We interrupted. "Do you prefer steadily increasing power and accelerando in the figures starting at bar 127?"

"Absolutely. This work is so perfectly written for the cello, every emotional nuance and inflection should be observed. Let's go forward to bar 155. Here the poco agitato denotes much passion, though it is marked only mezzo-forte. At 168 we are imitating the oboe with the restless marcato passage. I believe in playing these five notes equally, neither three-and-two nor vice-versa. The 16th rest at 170 was, I believe, inserted to create a kind of

Walevska digs into a lush lyrical passage for Dr. Herbert Axelrod.



An overview of the Walevska stretch.

breathlessness. For this breathless quality in 171, I play it downbow each time."

"You actually lift the bow off and start downbow again?"

"That's right, with the accelerando on that first note and, of course, building intensity to 174. At 185 the notes must be counted in strict tempo because there is so much going on in the orchestra it is easy to get confused.

"Starting in at bar 213, it must be piano because another great climax is in the making. And I like a slight glissando into bar 218. At bar 231, some cellists cross over to the D-string, but I prefer everything on the A-string all the way to the end of the passage."

"It's lucky cellists have a bit of a break after bar 238," we remarked. "After all that fire and brimstone they need the rest to prepare for the next assault."

"True, but let's not forget that 'Schelomo,' for all its passionate utterances, has many a moment of reflective introspection and calm. Now, the Andante Moderato at bar 277 is my very favorite passage. It communicates with my most profound and soulful feelings. I use the G-string here wherever possible, in preference to the D. In bars 279 and 281, I finger three-to-three from the E to the G. The 16th rest emulates a heartfelt gasp. In 282 I cross to the D-string—most cellists then go from the D-string to the A, but I remain on the D-string for its richer quality.

"When we come to the last note of 286, I play almost without vibrato, then come into the mezzo forte switching over to the A-string. And I do the quarter-tone bit in separate bows; it is more eloquent that way. In the rallentando at bar 290, I slide one-to-one on the C-sharp to the B-flat because I am approaching a ravishing pianissimo in the rallentando and piu lento. At bar 295 I slide the A octave leap on the G-string. Then at 297 there is another noticeable slide between the first two notes with the fourth finger.

"In bar 302 on that G-sharp on the G-string, I hold it, then make a profound pianissimo, and from the C-sharp to the D, suavely glide the first finger to the next note. At 321 I think there is a specific reason for the mezzo-forte. Often you hear cellists digging into a forte. That is wrong. It should be quiet, pensive, with a flowing bow."

"We notice that you continually stress strong contrasts in mood and dynamics."

"I certainly do, especially in 'Schelomo.' Again at 356 we have a magnificent hushed moment with a 'hairpin' marking. I'm sure Bloch had good cause for this. I slide back on the same note two-to-two instead of going two-to-one. It sounds warmer. At 361, when I am going from the last E, which is piano, to the G in 362, I start with practically no vibrato. Then I increase the vibrato on that G."

"You have two opposite sets of bowings on those notes. Which do you use?"

"I know. Actually, either way is acceptable, but I generally use upbow on the E and downbow on the G, then I quickly and unobtrusively replenish the downbow so that the following F is another downbow. At the poco ritardando, starting with the C-sharp, I again use hardly any vibrato, then steadily increase it, building to a rich, vibrant E-flat. I play the final dynamics just as Bloch indicated, with a slight hesitation just before that last ethereal D."

Walevska had concluded her lengthy recital on 'Schelomo.' Blithe as a bluejay, she was ready to continue the talkfest. But her interviewers required a short 'breather.' We still had several brief questions for the chatty cellist.

"Have you ever had an idol among cellists?"

"No, but I do appreciate every cellist for his best qualities. I greatly admire Casals, not only for his beautiful playing but for his wisdom in teaching and, of course, his invaluble contributions in behalf of the Bach Solo Suites. Piatigorsky I admire for his great efforts in popularizing the cello, and for his poetic playing. I admire Rostropovich because he has done so much to extend the cello repertoire. Starker always impresses me with his clean, pristine instrumentalism. Fournier moves me deeply with the warmth of his musicianship and lovely sound. I suppose the closest I had to an idol was Fritz Kreisler. I adore his recordings. And I have been inspired by many great singers. You see, I consider the cello as the instrument closest to the human voice."

"Are you nervous before a concert?"

"Not really. But I think a performer should be somewhat 'keyed-up,' have a healthy feeling of anticipation. I always have several hours of rest and repose before a concert. I prefer to be left alone with my thoughts. Occasionally, if I have a series of concerts close together in time, I will have a cup of coffee to help get 'revved up.' Also, I think about the audience, how they have paid for

Walevska reflects on a fingering.

their tickets in hopes of enjoying a beautiful, uplifting evening, and I owe it to them to give the very best that I have. I keep a little booklet with me containing inspirational quotations from great philosophers, and think carefully about the composers, their lives and styles. At concert time, an artist should think about what he can give to others, and not about himself. People say I always appear to be at ease when I play."

"Just one final question. How do you 'unwind' after the tensions and pressures of giving concerts?"

"Well—I love traveling, and never tire of it. But one of my greatest passions is dancing the tango. Whenever I go to Argentina, I really 'live it up.' The prize I am most proud of winning is one that I won with my partner in an Argentine tango contest."

Neither interviewer being an exponent of the tango, we were content to take the cellist's claim of expertise at her word. We wished her well and determined to keep abreast of her splendid recordings, which are steadily increasing in number.

Sidney Harth

Sidney Harth was born October 5, 1925, in Cleveland, Ohio, of Viennese-Jewish parentage. Neither parent was a musician, though his mother, inspired by the example of young Menuhin, insisted that he take up the study of the violin at age four with Albert Sack. At age nine, he studied with Herman Rosen, an Auer pupil, and from age 15 to 21 with Joseph Knitzer, whom he considered his principal teacher. Harth also studied with Felix Eyle and Joseph Fuchs and was coached at master classes by Georges Enesco and Mishel Piastro. In 1949 he was awarded second prize in the Poznan Wieniawski Contest.

His soloist-with-orchestra stints include appearances with the symphony orchestras of New York, Chicago, Moscow, Los Angeles, Cleveland, Warsaw, Boston and Brussels, under such conductors as Reiner, Ormandy, Leinsdorf, Martinon, Barbirolli, Steinberg, Mehta and other leading maestros; his credits as a recitalist include comprehensive tours throughout the United States and both Western and Eastern Europe, to enthusiastic critical acclaim. For seven years Harth was closely associated with Pablo Casals as concertmaster of the Puerto Rico Music Festival, and he is eminently respected among his professional colleagues as one of the world's elite concertmasters by virtue of his first-chair orchestral leadership in Chicago, Louisville and, at this writing, Los Angeles. In conjunction with his career as a violin soloist, Harth was also the Andrew Mellon Professor of Music appointee and administrative head of the Department of Music at Carnegie-Mellon University in Pittsburgh. His numerous public appearances as a chamber music artist include television and recital hall concerts as first violinist of the Carnegie-Mellon and Louisville String Quartets and many other chamber ensembles. He has served as a Professor of Violin on the faculties of DePaul University, the University of Colorado, the Aspen Festival and Banff Center.

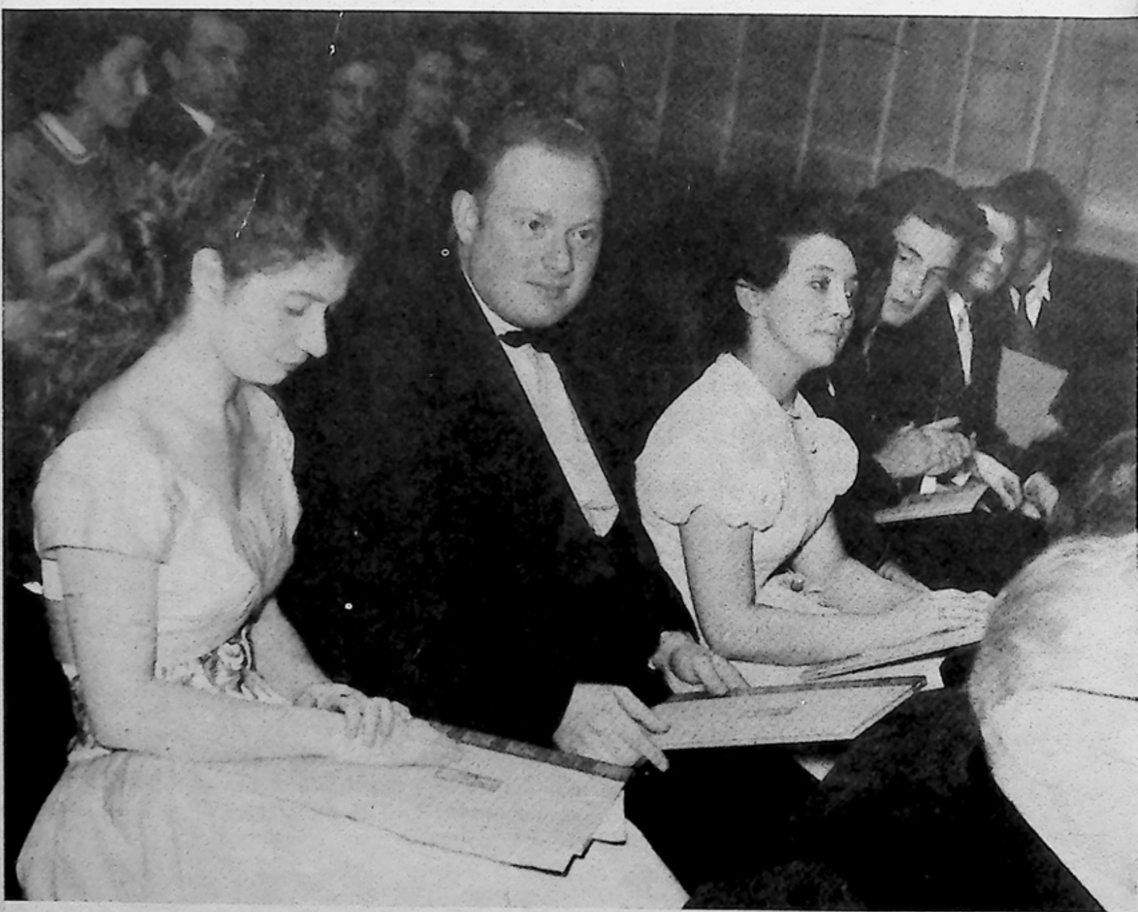
In recent years, Harth, who studied conducting with Leon Barzin, has been engaged in fulfilling a profound urge to develop a career as a symphonic conductor and is currently Associate Conductor of the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra (as well as concertmaster), Principal Guest Conductor of the Jerusalem Symphony and Acting Musical Director of the Puerto Rico Symphony. He is married to the well-known violinist Teresa Testa, who has long been his associate violinist in string quartet concerts, and is presently a member of the Los Angeles Philharmonic. They have two children.

Sidney Harth is one of a small group of violinists who can honestly lay claim to being an all-around 'man of music.'

In addition to his previously listed credits, he has also engaged in musical composition, lecturing and writing. We interviewed Harth at his tastefully furnished apartment in Hollywood.

He is a 'big' man, perhaps as close in corporeal resemblance to the legendary Ysaye as any contemporary violinist; fair-skinned, ruddy-haired, soft-spoken, affable, radiating both physical and mental well-being and possessing a good sense of humor. However, we soon sensed that beneath the benign exterior was the fiery temperament that manifested itself in his violin performances, and we later verified that Harth, the conductor, was a stern musical

Poznan Competition, 1958. Harth, Second Prize winner; Rosa Feyn, First Prize Winner, by 3/4 of a point (to right of Harth).



Harth conducting the Aspen Symphony, with Claude Frank, piano soloist, 1974.

martinet comparable to any. His responses to our questions were quick, positive and succinctly phrased, the words of a distinctly American artist who knew exactly what he wanted to say. We queried him about his early training.

"My mother was so determined that I participate in the Arts that she had me in ballet training. I think it was the Leona Hart Dancing School, practically in infancy. Then I started the violin, and after about six months, when I was four and a half, I played a Vivaldi Concerto in a public recital." He chuckled. "I remember having an accident and damaging my quarter-size violin, but I went out and played anyway. The show must go on, you know."

"Which of your early teachers was most helpful to you, and why?"

A candid photo of Sidney Harth and wife, Teresa, at a quartet rehearsal.

"In my pre-teen years, without a doubt, it was Herman Rosen, an Auer pupil who unfortunately died while still in his thirties. I was with him from age nine to eleven. At that time I went to school half a day and had a tutor the rest of the time. One of Rosen's invaluable contributions to my training was his policy that demanded pupils memorize all etudes and, after each book was finished, play the entire book from memory. In later life, memorizing always came easy to me, thanks to Rosen. He encouraged camaraderie between his pupils, but also healthy rivalry, and a student who excelled his colleagues always felt a great sense of achievement. I had two or three one-hour lessons a week. Rosen's assistant teachers were James Caesar and Eugene Bergen.

"However, let me emphasize—in my entire youth I never practiced enough—at most, two hours a day. I was a perennial 'goof-off,' always involved in something or other besides my violin. I played baseball and basketball and even became editor of my high school paper. And I must freely admit that throughout my student years I was very rebellious with all my teachers."

"What of your other early teachers?"

"I studied briefly with Joseph Fuchs at two different periods. He started me on the Flesch scale system and inculcated in me a deep respect for Bach. I recall he kept me on one or two pieces, such as Vieuxtemps' *Ballade and Polonaise* for an entire year. I was compelled to drop his lessons for financial reasons. In fact, just before entering my teens, I had to stop studying for a year, due to strained economic circumstances. Later I was able to get a scholarship at the Cleveland Institute of Music for which I partly compensated by playing in the orchestra. I had another teacher who had best be left nameless, since I often had to wait for him to 'sober up' as long as two and a half hours before getting my lesson. To his credit, though, he is mainly responsible for the development of my vibrato and a good deal of my technical equipment. He introduced me to the Flesch 'Urstudien' and the Dounis methodology."

"We noticed your exceptional affinity for the old Viennese style in several Kreisler numbers that you played recently in a Hollywood Bowl concert. Where did you learn it?"

"Thanks for the compliment. I would attribute this affinity to several factors. First there was my Viennese parental background and then there were my remembrances of having heard Kreisler himself in concerts and recordings. I have also worked closely with numerous Viennese conductors and pianists."

"Tell us of your study with Joseph Knitzer."

"I was a scholarship pupil with Knitzer at the Cleveland Institute of Music from age 15 to 17 and continued with him until I was 21. I studied the bulk of my repertoire with him. Harth spoke of Knitzer with much warmth and affection. "He was a generous spirit, the very soul of sincerity towards his pupils-one of those rare people who could give completely of himself to others. When I came to him my technique was already well developed. Luckily I never encountered any special violinistic problems during my student years. Knitzer was a soloist himself, taught me how to play as

Carnegie-Mellon String Quartet: (left to right) George Grossman, viola; Teresa and Sidney Harth, violins; Theo Salzman, cello.

Harth's student class at Aspen, Colorado, 1974.

a soloist, and was a major influence in initiating my lifelong interest in chamber music. There are certain other great musicians who have been profoundly inspirational to me such as Casals and Enesco, but I regard Knitzer as my principal teacher. Sadly, he died at only 53 after a ten-year illness."

"Did you study with anyone after Knitzer?"

"Yes, I worked for two years with Mishel Piastro; he taught me a lot about bow articulation and solo projection. Later I played once a week in Enesco's classes at the Mannes School of Music. I learned Bach mostly from him and consider that he contributed a great deal to the improvement of my musical tastes. Frankly, I have striven to pattern my musical life after his image."

"What about your experiences with Casals?"

"Casals taught me what I like to call 'the natural element in music-making.' I was at the first Casals music festival in Prades, France and subsequently served as his concertmaster for seven years in the music festivals at San Juan, Puerto Rico. From him I gained a heightened sense of idealism and a new dimension of reverence for music. And I must certainly mention Fritz Reiner, who was an idol of my childhood. When I won the Polish medal he contacted me and wanted me as concertmaster of the Chicago Symphony. But then he decided I needed more seasoning on the

Strauss solos. The following year I appeared as soloist with the Chicago orchestra—with Hendl in the afternoon and Reiner at night. Then Reiner invited me to be his concertmaster, a chair I occupied from 1959 to 1963. His influence on my conducting and musicianship was profound, and I learned much about Strauss and Wagner from him.

"Let's get back to your student years. What etudes did you study?"

Harth and Jack Benny 'cut a caper' at Aspen, 1973.

Pablo Casals, unidentified woman and Sidney Harth, San Juan, Puerto Rico, 1973.

"All of the best known ones: Kreutzer, Rode, Fiorillo, Dont, Gavinies, Paganini and even those by Dancla, Saint-Lubin, Ernst, both books by Wieniawski and Paganini's lesser known '60 Variations on a Theme'."

"If you practiced only a maximum of two hours a day, how did you accomplish all this?"

"The two hours a day was only until I was about eighteen. After that, the clock scarcely had enough waking hours in the day to compute my practice time. I literally had the violin in my hand day and night. Another factor, too, was that I had to earn my own living since I was 18 and had a family to support at an early age. I have done all kinds of commercial playing, including pit orchestra jobs."

"Do you feel this retarded your artistic development?"

"Not at all. Such celebrated violinists as Kreisler, Thibaud, Ysaye and others had to earn their way doing various types of 'entertainment' playing in their younger years. However, I do think that this hampered my career as a soloist to some extent."

"How far did your formal education extend?"

"I graduated high school, then went to the Cleveland Institute of Music for four years, from which I received my degree. At C.I.M. I would say that the curriculum involved about 75% musical subjects and the balance, academic."

"Tell us about your first public recital."

"I made many appearances, of course, as a youngster, but I consider that my real public debut was at eighteen. The C.I.M. director wanted me to wait until I was 21, but when I insisted, I finally was permitted to appear. Then as luck would have it, the newspapers were on strike and I didn't get a single review. I seem to remember that the program included the Schubert Op. 162 and Bloch Sonatas."

"Since your original rise to international acclaim as a soloist came as the result of your second prize honors at the Wieniawski Contest in Poznan, the highest award ever given there to an American, would you tell us of your experiences in violin competitions and your opinions about competitions in general?"

"Yes. My first try was as a teenager in the National Federation of Music Clubs competition. I scrimped together enough money to pay for my transportation to the various trials and finally made it to the finals. There were two of us who made the trip to Washington for the showdown. But the judges decided that neither of us was worthy and didn't award a prize in the violin category. Naturally, I was despondent, but I'm too active a person to be downhearted for long. I had better luck after that. In 1949 I won the Naumburg first prize in violin, which gave me the opportunity for more public appearances and greatly enhanced my reputation."

"How did you make your way to the Wieniawski contest?"

"I was concertmaster in Louisville at the time, in 1958, and the Louisville Symphony Association sponsored me. The Polish government paid for my transportation home. As you know, the point standings were very close. I was nosed out by the Russian Rosa Feyn, a fine fiddler, by only three-quarters of a point. Judging by the enthusiastic acclaim given me, many observers felt that I

Concertmaster Sidney Harth and assistant Concertmaster Teresa Harth take bows for their performance of Bach's "Double Concerto in D minor," with the Louisville Symphony, 1954.

Harth and pianist Fou T'Song receive audience acclaim for their Sonata recital. First year of the New Mexico Chamber Music Festival.

was the audience's choice, but one must take these things in stride. As the first American laureate of this competition, my name was now known throughout the world, and I received quite a few career advantages."

"Did you feel you were unfairly treated in Poland?"

"No. In any case, how could I, when they presented me with the special Wieniawski medal which had been awarded previously only to Malcuszynski and David Oistrakh? I am not one to indulge in 'sour grapes.' Before entering such an affair, one should realize that political ramifications and overtones must inevitably play a part in the proceedings, and if one cannot be realistic about it, perhaps he should stay home. Competitions, as such, have never affected or impaired my own self-confidence and resolution to

Conductor Harth rehearsing the Aspen Symphony, 1970.

grow as an artist. I know contests can be a harrowing, even destructive experience for many sensitive young musicians, but I suppose they are a 'necessary evil'—particularly in the case of those young artists who do not have VIP contacts and backing or direct government sponsorship. But I definitely feel that the days when a young artist could *sustain* a permanent top-level career *solely* on the impetus of an international contest first or second prize award are on the way out. And if you look around, you will see that more and more young artists are achieving important soloist careers without having competed in international scrimmages."

"Mr. Harth, among your many musical activities, you have had much experience as a teacher. Would you tell us some of your pedagogic ideas and methods?"

"All right. But please don't mind my 'ad lib' skipping around since this is not a prepared cohesive treatise on violin instruction. I have always loved teaching, though I am now so involved in other

Assistant Concertmaster Teresa and Conductor Sidney in a convivial mood during a rehearsal break, Aspen, 1970.

Harth and pianist Leo Smit during their presentation of the complete Mozart Piano-Violin Sonata cycle, Pittsburgh, 1973.

musical activities that I am not presently working with any students. I started teaching in my early 20's and have been on quite a few university music faculties and have had numerous private pupils. I feel that a teacher must give his best, his all, without overmuch distraction from other involvements."

"How long were your lessons?"

"Generally, one hour."

"Do you consider that an hour is enough time?"

Harth laughed. "Sometimes it's not enough, and sometimes

Associate Conductor Harth of the Los Angeles Philharmonic and piano soloist, Jerome Lowenthal, discuss the score of the Ginastera Piano Concerto. Subscription Concert, 1973.

Harth, conductor-soloist of Vivaldi's "Seasons" with the Los Angeles Philharmonic Ensemble.

it's too much. But seriously, if the time is properly allocated, a good deal can be accomplished. I know that a pupil can go through only a restricted portion of his total work in a single hour, but you see, I believe that the teacher's essential function is to teach the pupil how to practice correctly on his own and to think for himself. And if the pupil really 'means business,' I can impart that to him in an hour lesson.

"I concentrate on scales and etudes in strict chronological order, with no omissions. The student should thoroughly learn two etude books a year, at his own technical level. Etudes play a vital role in developing stamina—a 'must' for every serious violinist. In the lesson itself, I concentrate on scales for 10 minutes, etudes for 10 minutes, and spend another 10 minutes devising, with the pupil, a special exercise for eradicating an individual bad habit. This is written down for home practice. It usually requires about six months to cure a bad habit. The final 30 minutes of the session are devoted to repertoire."

"How do you advise the pupil to divide his practice time?'

"Hopefully, he will multiply these lesson allocations by three, at least.

"How do you work on items of performing repertoire?"

"I always juggle the various musical styles so that the student is immediately alert to stylistic diversities. We will jump from a movement of Bach to one of Wieniawski, then to Brahms, then to Mozart, etc. Sometimes we will start with the last movement of a work. But let me emphasize strongly—*I entirely disagree with those who favor practicing passages from the performance repertoire as a replacement for the daily practice of scales and arpeggios.* Not only should one practice the customary doublestop intervals, but I recommend the practice of fourths, fifths, sevenths, and ninths. And I advise scales starting and ending with different fingerings and notes. One-string scales and the changing of individual notes

Harth, administrative head of the Carnegie-Mellon University Department of Music, guest pianist Jeffrey Siegel, and faculty members Harry Franklin, pianist, and Leonardo Balada, composer.

Dr. Applebaum tries out the "Earl of Plymouth" Strad on which Harth is currently performing.

in scales. This can ensure that a violinist will play as well, technically, at 50 as in his youth."

"Do you think that the pupils of today are as proficient as those in your student years?"

"No. I honestly do not. Unfortunately most of them receive only a smattering of basic training compared to that of my youth. Nor do we have nearly as many outstanding young violinists today. However, I do think contemporary young wind and brass players are better."

"How much literature do you expect a talented pupil to learn in, say, a year?"

"On an average, two concertos, two sonatas, two major concert works and several short pieces."

"A certain number of player-pedagogues stress imitative teaching. What do you think of that?"

"This can be both helpful and dangerous. Some pupils flounder because their teacher is unable to illustrate 'how it is actually done.' But direct imitation can destroy a student's individuality. I always encourage my pupils to concoct their own fingerings and bowings. Then we discuss it and I give them my reasons for suggested changes. This is an important part of the process of 'teaching the pupil to teach himself'."

"Do you believe that vibrato can be taught?"

"I certainly do. What cannot be taught is that ephemeral instinct that enables a violinist to use vibrato with good taste and a variety of sound. Some players, for example, have a beautiful vibrato and tone, but it is always the same and, therefore, tiresome. Arm, wrist and finger vibrato must be correlated so that an entire pallette of tonal color can be employed. This requires the highest

Performance of Ludwig Maurer's "Sinfonie Concertante for Four Violins," with soloists Pinchas Zukerman, Itzak Perlman, Sidney Harth and Mark Kramer (latter not in photo). Aspen Symphony, 1975.

Maurer's "Concertante" with solo violinists Henri Temianka, Sidney Harth, Sheldon Sanove and Stuart Canin, California Chamber Orchestra, Royce Hall, UCLA Westwood, California, 1977.

Conductor Zubin Mehta and Associate Conductor Sidney Harth of the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra.

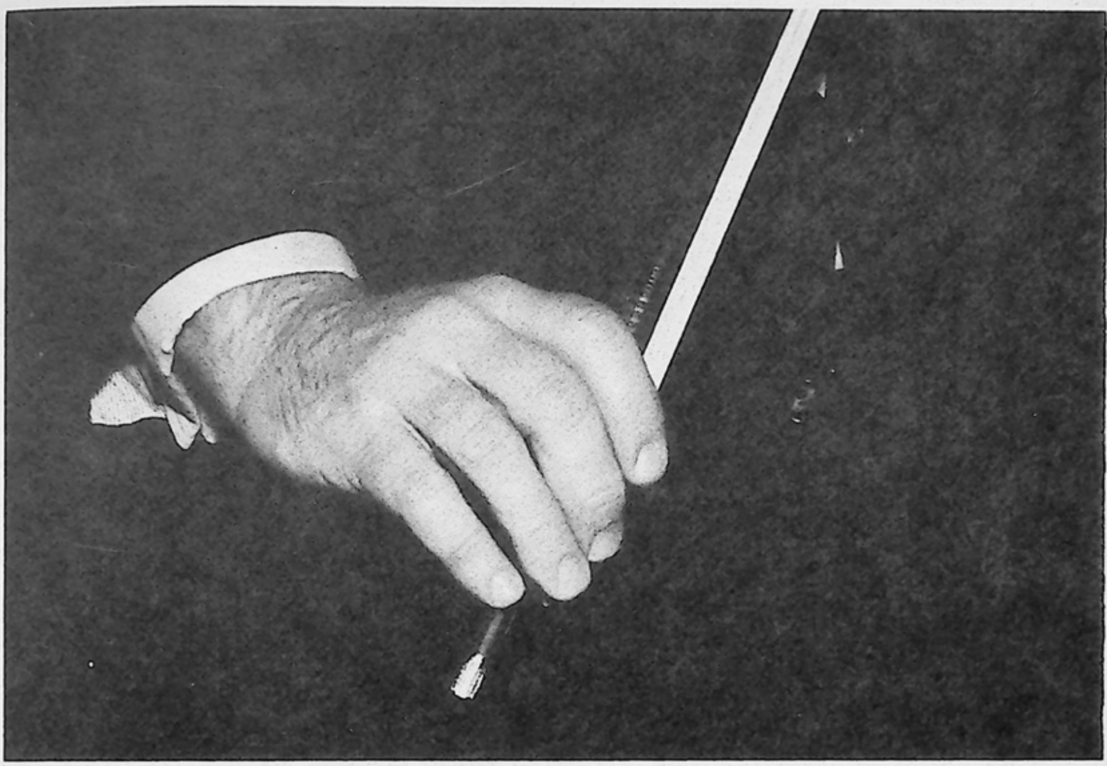
calibre of artistry to achieve. Incidentally, I do not agree with those teachers who recommend that the vibrato start with a backward oscillation of the fingertips, that is, below the exact pitch. I start the vibrato impetus forward—above the pitch. I stress practicing vibrato not only fast in 'forte' notes and slow in 'piano' notes, but the opposite, which is considerably more difficult."

"Getting back to fingering, for a moment—do you have any general rule about fingering selection?"

"Inasmuch as finger structures and sizes are so varied there can be no 'ordained' right and wrong fingerings. But I think a violinist should be realistic in public solo performances and avoid 'fancy' or experimental fingerings. One should always keep in mind the question of clarity of projection from the stage. For instance, in playing Bach I always prefer fingerings in the lower positions.

Harth conducting the family concert at the Hollywood Bowl, featuring the "Big Bird" from "Sesame Street," 1977.

Harth demonstrates the opening of the Beethoven "Violin Concerto" for us at his Hollywood apartment.

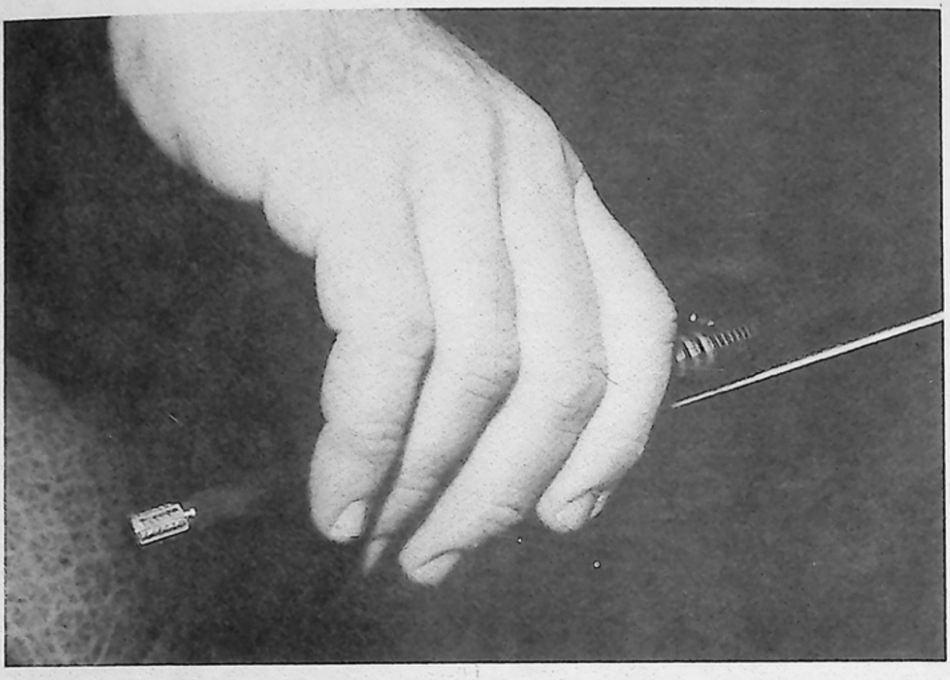


Harth displays his preferred bow grip.

"While we are still talking about the left hand fingers, let me touch on a major point which I think is too often overlooked by teachers—that is, the degree of finger pressure on the strings. I am utterly opposed to the banging of fingers against the fingerboard supposedly to develop finger strength, or of any undue finger pressure of any kind. Fingers should fall on the string with their natural weight. From that practice, a variety of sound colors can be produced and a tight, pinched tone avoided."

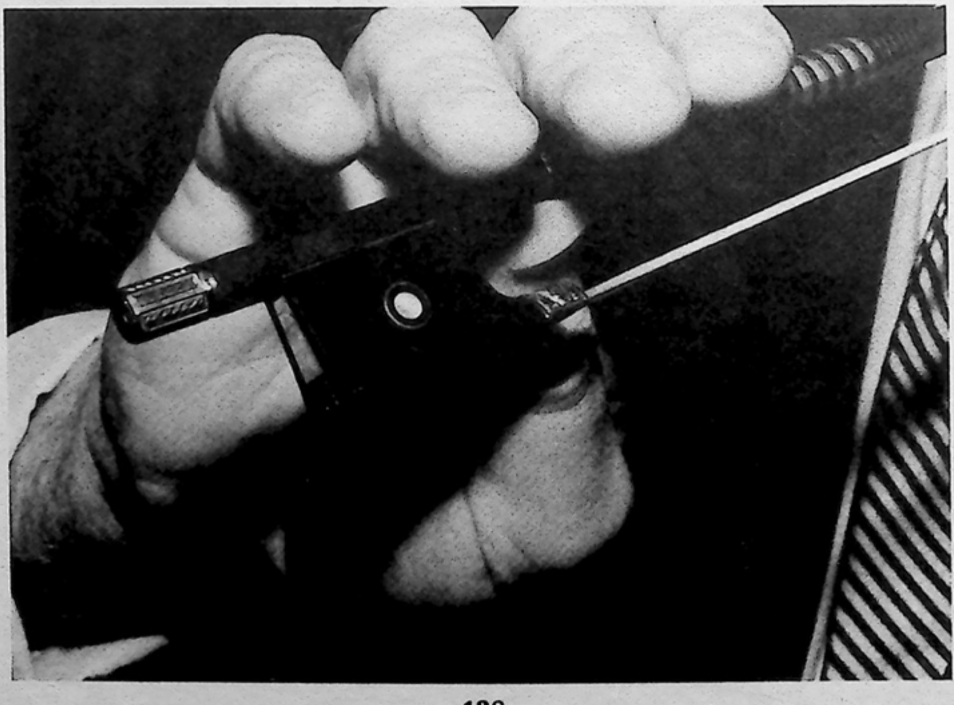
"Mr. Harth, we know how insistent you are about the need for constant practice of long bows for control and tonal beauty. What about other types of bowing?"

"To me, a really fine spiccato is a difficult stroke to develop. (Many teachers refer to this as the sautille bowing) Actually, it is a fast detache with a bit of elbow movement which demands much



The Harth bow grip has the fingers held closely together.

An underview of Harth's bow grip at the frog. Observe the sharply defined thumb position.



Harth smiles broadly during his informal talk-demonstration of the Beethoven Concerto.

concentration and stamina to bring it off. As for staccato, I find it more valuable to work on a perfectly controlled staccato rather than the so-called 'nervous' staccato."

"Speaking of nervousness, are you nervous before and during you solo performances?"

Anyone who says he isn't, is—to put it politely—a prevaricator. Conquering nervousness is a constant process, and the more one plays in public, the better. A good suggestion to students is to practice playing to an imaginary audience - at least, I found this helpful in combatting nervousness.

"Another thing that helps is frequent playing with a pianist. When I was head of the Department of Music at Carnegie-Mellon

A discussion of interpretative ideas between Harth and Antonio Ros-Marba, newly appointed conductor of the Madrid Symphony, Barcelona, 1977.

Henry Roth, Eugene Fodor, Sidney Harth and Dr. Herbert Axelrod at the Harth apartment.

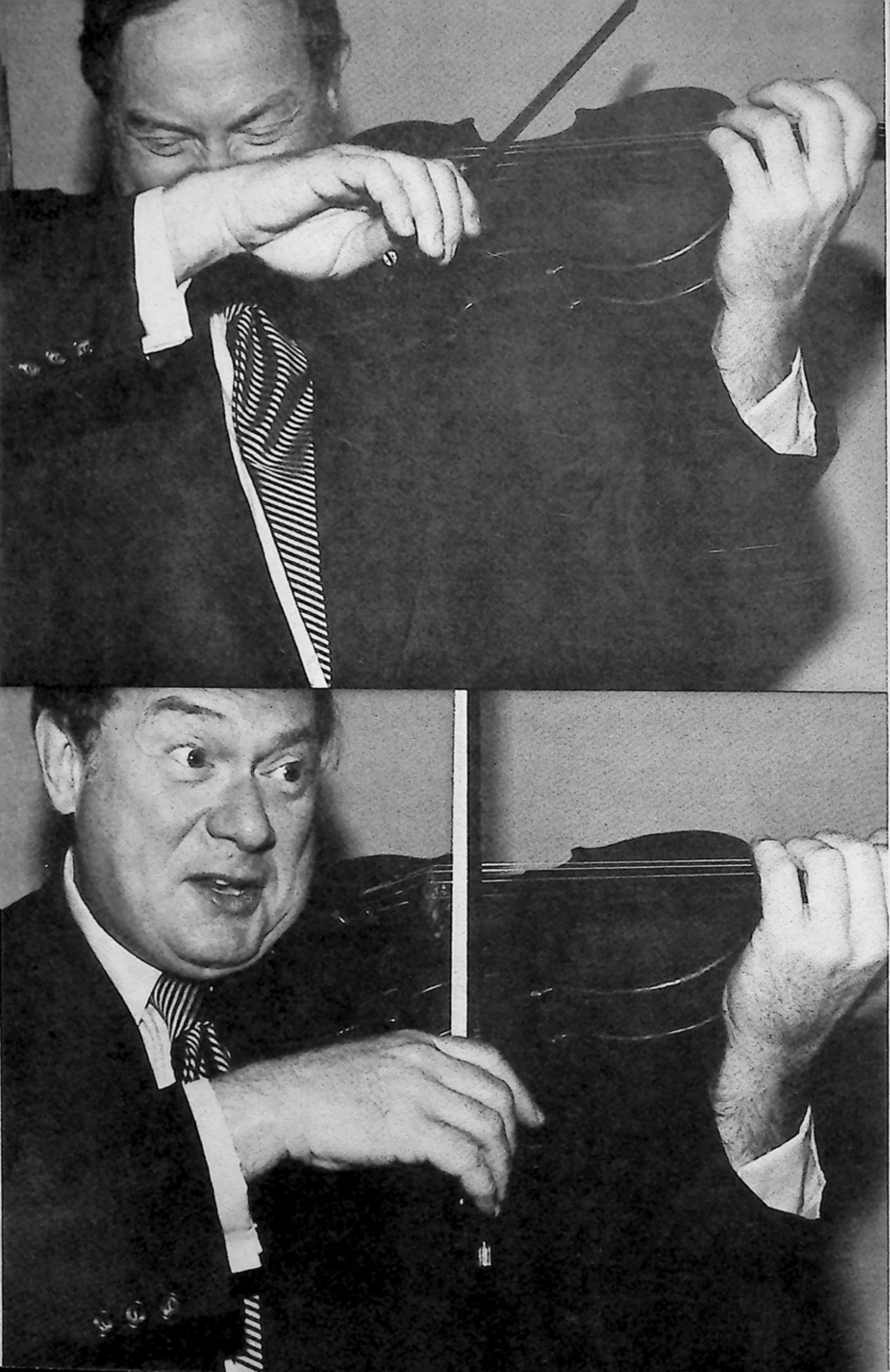
University, I constantly argued with the powers-that-be to allot funds for staff accompanists, and finally convinced them."

"Why did you choose to leave such a fruitful executive position?"

"I suppose you might say it was a desire for 'new worlds to conquer.' I long had a driving ambition to become a symphonic conductor, and for that one must of course have ample opportunity to conduct a great symphonic organization, hence my current position as Associate Conductor-Concertmaster of the Los Angeles Philharmonic. I hope to eventually be principal conductor of a major symphony."

"Who was your greatest purely violinistic inspiration?"

Without an instant's hesitation, Harth said, "Heifetz. And among the younger generation, I have great admiration for Perlman."

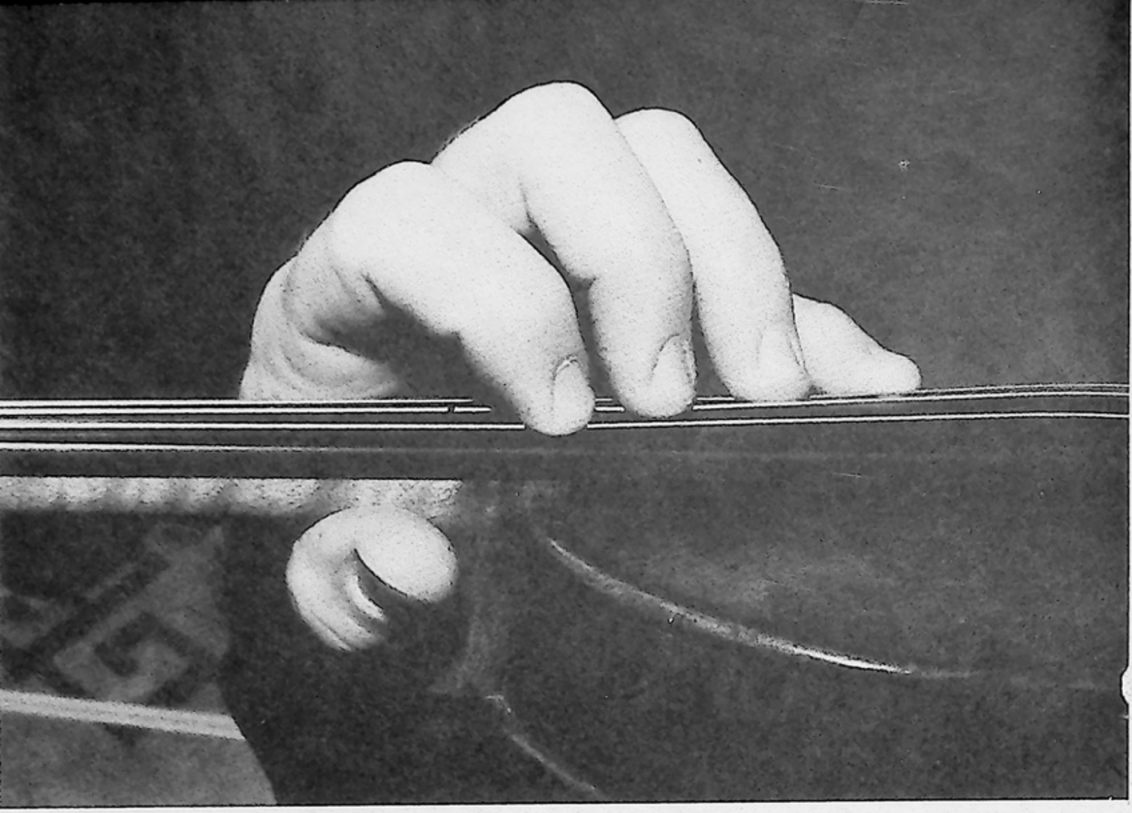


Sidney Harth: from levity to sobriety in a single phrase.

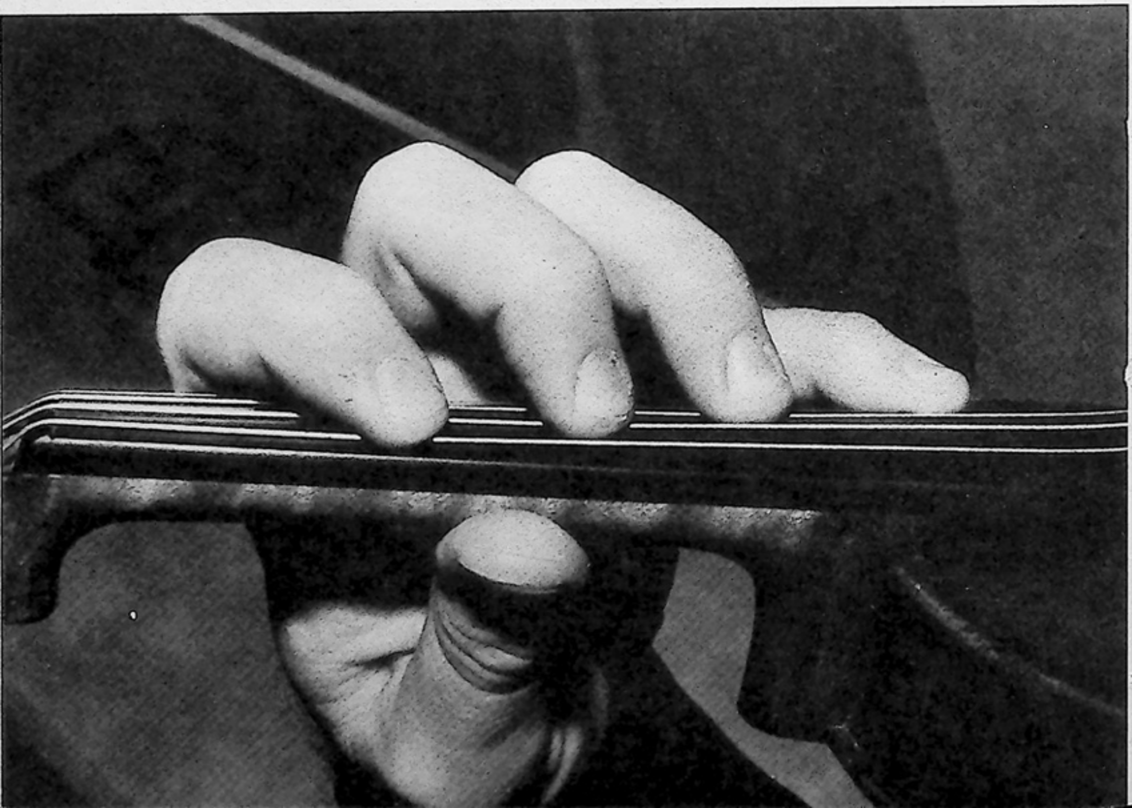
"In view of your incredibly crowded schedule, how do you keep up your violin technique?"

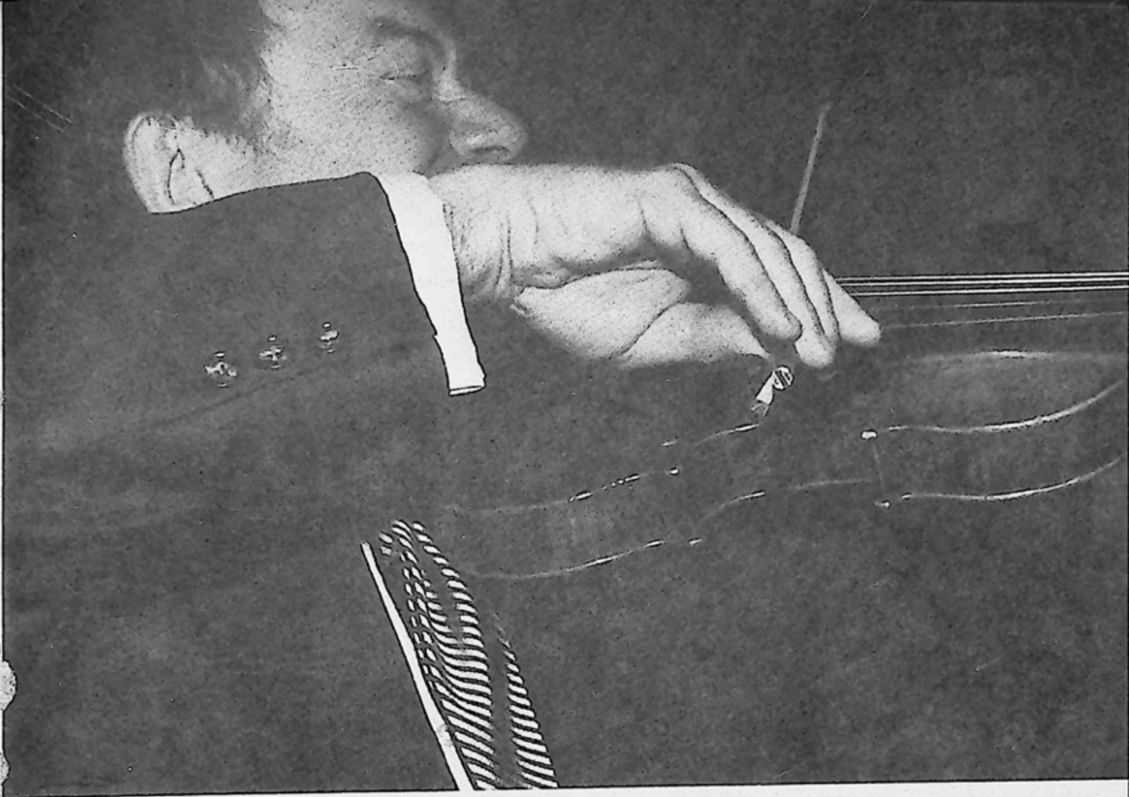
"I practice scales or etudes every day for 15 to 20 minutes, very carefully, plus work on whatever compositions I am preparing for a concert. I can play anything in my repertoire with no more than two days to a week of preparation, and some works I have immediately at my fingertips with no prior preparation needed. Fortunately I have good powers of retention."

"With all your solo and conducting commitments, how do you find time for public chamber music performances?"



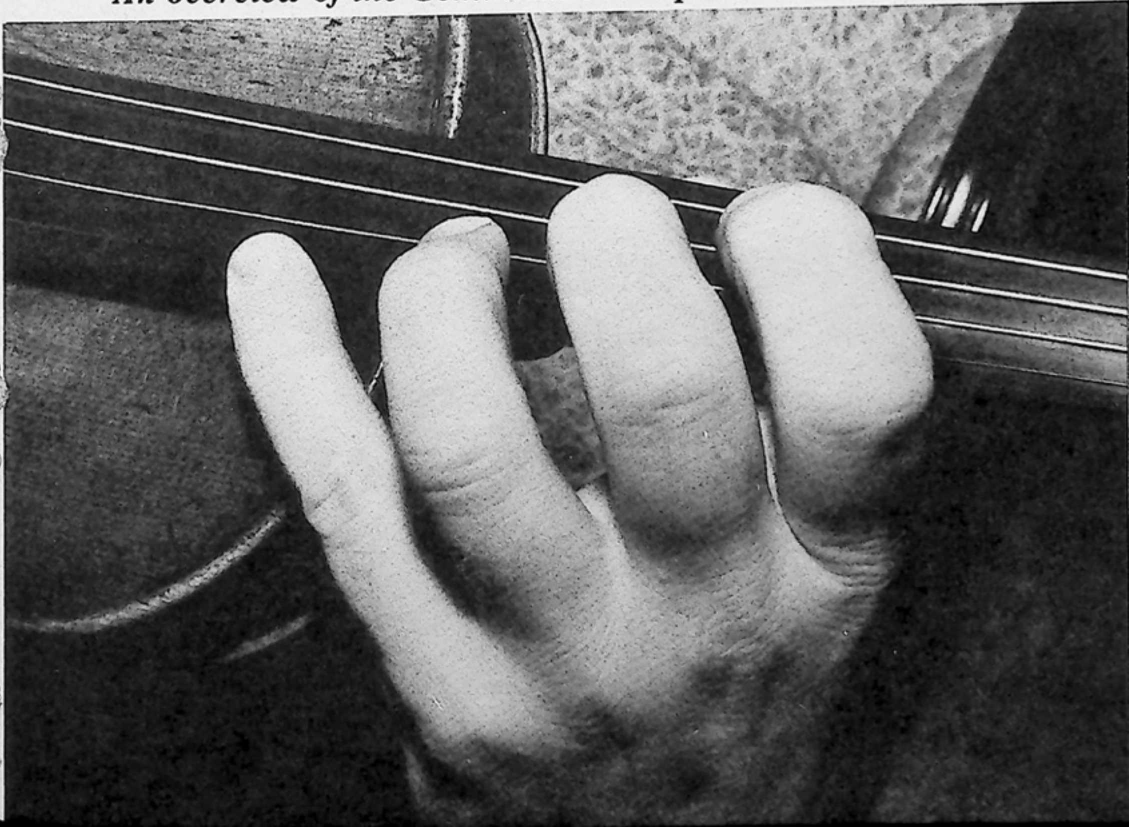
Characteristic views of Harth's hand in the Geminiani chord position.

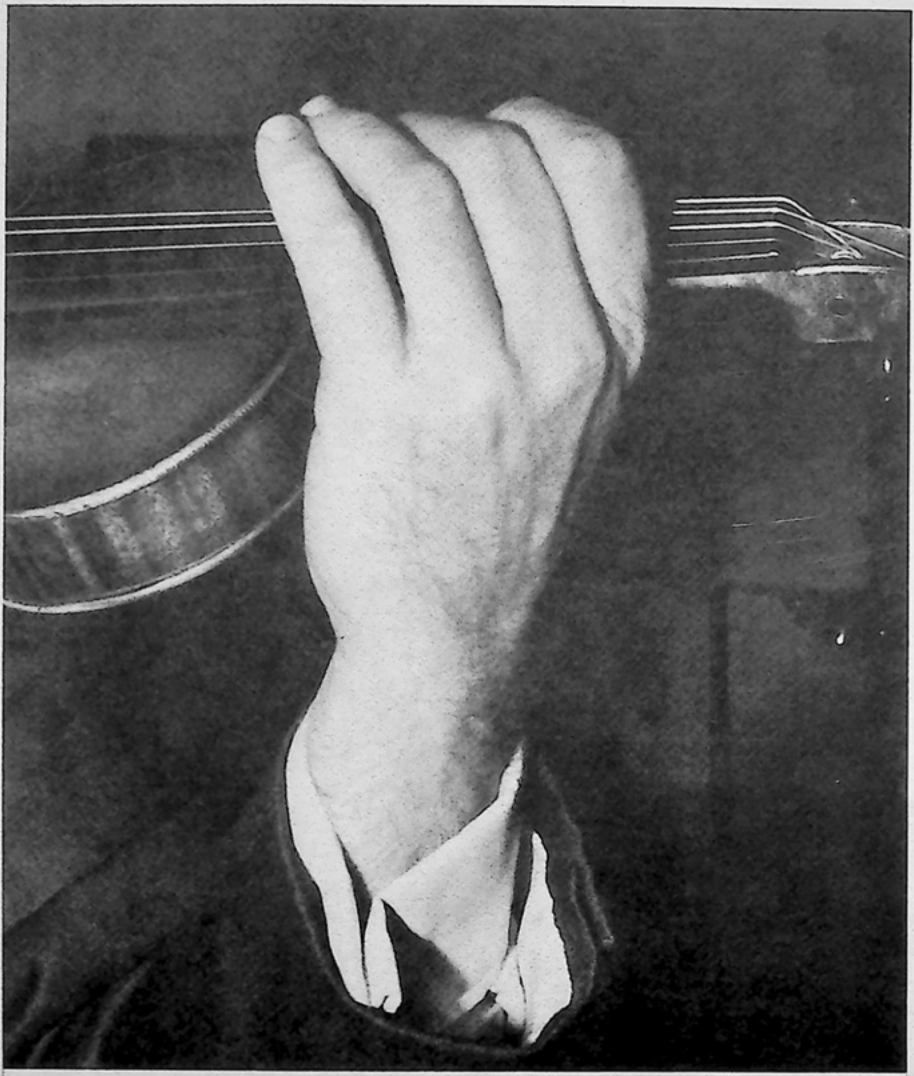




Harth's bow hand position is classical and perfect.

An overview of the Geminiani chord position.





Harth's left hand in the process of initiating a vibrato.

Harth listens as Fodor quips.

"I consider chamber music playing not as a temporary diversion, but an integral part of my collective work. Ever since I can remember, I had a string quartet, and I never felt that the time involved for preparation interfered with my solo studies and performances. I intend to be active in chamber music for the rest of my career."

"Do you feel that your responsibilities as a conductor have in any way impaired your ability as a solo violinist?"

"Definitely not. I am still far too active as a violinist for this to happen. In fact, my work as a conductor and the required intensive study of scores gives me musical insights that one who is solely an instrumentalist seldom acquires. Now I can much more clearly understand the conductor's point of view. There is one aspect, though, I think should be mentioned. You see, sometimes I am scheduled to both play a major violin concerto and conduct a symphonic masterwork on the same program."

"What special problem does this present?'

"A purely physical one. Each effort requires use of a different set of muscles. I discovered that if I conduct first, my violin play-

Alexander Schneider and Harth in an intimate pose. Casals Festival, Puerto Rico, 1974.

ing can suffer to some extent, but not vice-versa. Therefore, I always insist upon opening with the violin work."

"Do you not find some contradictions, career-wise, in competing with the field, both as a violin soloist and a conductor in this age of specialization?"

"Yes, this is true. I agree that strictly in terms of career impetus, complete concentration on one or the other, particularly at this juncture of my life, would be preferable."

Harth had previously promised to make some brief remarks about the first movement of the Beethoven Violin Concerto and give us the violin part with his personal fingerings and bowings. The marked violin part was the Peters edition, originally edited by Carl Flesch. He picked up his violin in order to illustrate his observations as he prepared to play through the movement. It was obviously an old Italian violin in beautiful condition. We asked about it and his bow.

"This is the 'Earl of Plymouth' Strad which is the property of the Los Angeles Philharmonic Association. I have been using it for

Harth and Pianist Leo Smit receive audience kudos during Mozart Sonata cycle presentation, Pittsburgh, 1973.

some time. The bow is a Hill—I like Hill bows very much, and I also have a Lamy and Tubbs." We noticed that he used no type of pad, only a white handkerchief, and asked him about it. He said he had long since decided that a handkerchief gave him all the skin protection he needed, and he required no special shoulder or neck support for the violin.

He quickly tuned his violin, then laid it in his violin case on a nearby chair to have it handy, and began his exposition in a mood that was light-hearted but extremely assured. (Harth seems never to be inconvenienced by indecision or at a loss for words).

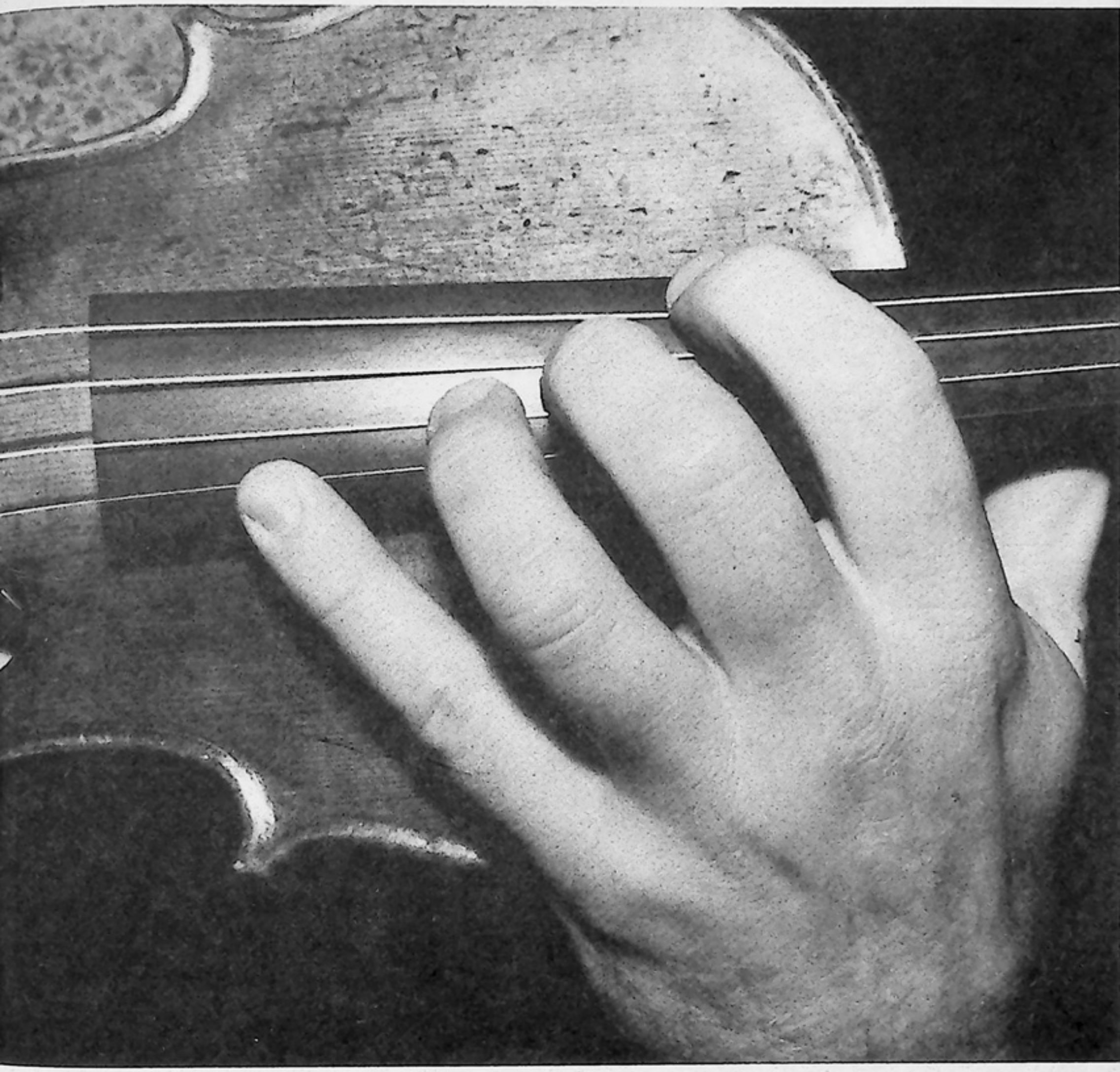
"I know," he began, "that any discussion of the interpretation of the Beethoven Concerto is bound to stir up argument and debate. That is as it should be with this most universal and majestic of all violin concertos. I myself often experience great disappointment with the performance of this epic work by even some of the most celebrated violinists, and I find that scarcely any of the younger generation players have a really comprehensive knowledge of the orchestral score. Age aside, how many violinists notice, for example, that the down beat of the 29th bar of the opening Tutti, before the violin makes its first entrance, is an eighth note chord, whereas two bars later, in the harmonic inversion, it is a quarter note? A small point, yes, but a serious artist should be familiar with every minute detail of the score, even if for some personal interpretative reason he wishes to make some type of small alteration.

"In performing any concerto, the musical relationship between the soloist and conductor is of prime importance, but in the Beethoven Concerto this is extraordinarily so because of the tremendously varied conceptions of how Beethoven's music, and especially this work, should be interpreted. I have seen soloists bedevil a conductor to the point of obnoxiousness and have seen conductors who are absolutely contemptuous of a soloist's desires. Having been on both sides of the fence myself, this problem is particularly close to me. Basically, of course, it is much more important that a soloist and conductor agree on the over-all musical symmetry of the work than to lock horns quibbling over trifles."

"Do you think if the exact letter of the score is observed, most of these problems can be avoided?"

Harth frowned. "And what is the exact letter of the score? I

Harth as soloist in the Glazounov "Violin Concerto," with the Aspen Symphony, 1972.



Harth in a high position extension.

The exceptional relaxation of Harth's left hand is evident.

A jovial Harth sports with a down-bow staccato.

remember on one of my tours that took me to East Germany, I was shown Beethoven's original score for the 'Emperor' Piano Concerto. Part of it was in excellent readable script; the rest a mass of ugly blotches scarcely decipherable and totally dependent on the knowledge, ideas and integrity of the publisher's transcriber. No, an inspiring interpretation of the Beethoven Violin Concerto requires much more than mere textual correctness, even assuming an exact, unaltered authentic score exists.

"One thing, though, that could help would be for the soloist to invest in his own score and orchestral parts, mark his phrasings and bowings clearly, and send them to the conductor well in advance of the concert, so that he has ample time to look them over.

He picked up his violin again and before launching into the broken octaves of the opening bars, sang the end of the preceding Tutti with a slight ritard. "That's the way I prefer it." His opening stressed a sense of freedom. "I like to think of this introduction section before the establishment of the main theme on the E-string as a sort of 'fantasia.' I have been called down for having this point of view, but that's the way I feel the music." We noted, however, that he carefully avoided exaggerated rhythmic distortion.

"On the D-scale just prior to the main theme high on the E-string, in line four of page two, I make a slight ritardando so that the tympanist can properly adjust his rhythmic beat. Note, too, how I use the fourth position in the fifth bar descending triplets.

Fodor banteringly 'examines' Harth's fingers.

Mastery of the fourth and second postions can greatly increase a violinist's ability for subtle nuance.

"At letter A I play the first two 16th notes in the third beat, up-bow because it helps to establish the heroic virtuosic mood this section should project. And you will note that in the second bar before letter B, I use the first and second fingers—I think this helps to increase the trill speed and clarity. I once heard Francescatti play this trill gloriously, and he told me he did it with the first and second fingers. I have followed suit ever since.

An overview of the Harth bow grip. Below: Harth requires no special shoulder or neck support for holding the violin, but merely uses a handkerchief for skin protection.

"In the first line of page four, in the third bar, I play the pesky A to G-sharp half steps slurred in twos to give them more presence. And in the rhythmic triplets of the sixth line, I take a quick look at the conductor during the eighth rests. Again, in starting the long trill passage, I play the B to C-sharp trill with the first and second fingers, and in the final E trill I eliminate the grace note at the end so that I can lead naturally, without the distracting adornment, into the downward legato scale passage."

We pointed out that letter D was practically a repetition of the opening. "True," he agreed. "It is another 'fantasia' section, but at the 14th bar after D the rhythm must be exact and right up to tempo. When we reach the bar before letter E, I make a ritardando in the grace notes, even though it is not indicated in the score. I feel this helps to set the stage for a section of exceptional nobility of spirit which I would like to play in an utterly relaxed manner. In the final line of page six, I give a slight accent to the first note of each triplet just before the tutti."

In the lyric section 15 bars after letter F, we noticed that Harth

Harth and Dimitri Rudiakov, bassoonist of the Jerusalem Symphony, at the historic site of Massada.

Harth and student winner of competition on television with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, 1977.

played in a straightforward manner, avoiding any patent position changes *a la Kreisler.* For all his romantic proclivities, Harth is essentially a violinist of his own time and place. We discussed the question of the cadenza.

"I think," he said, "that every student should compose his own cadenza, even if he never gets an opportunity to perform it in public. This is excellent training. I composed my own, and even though I was once taken to task for it by a critic in Belgium, I'm glad I did it. Some critics find it hard to accept anything that is a departure from the beaten path. Sure, I generally use the Kreisler cadenza, but does this mean violinists must play only two or three cadenzas to the great concertos forever?"

Since Harth did not use the Flesch cadenza as published in the Peters edition, we did not include it with our interview material, and jumped to the sublime theme that immediately followed.

"I play the dolce 'sotta voce' with the first two bars on the D-string; the G-string would make the tone too thick. In the following groups of eighth triplets that alternate with the four 16th notes, the rhythm changes and tone texture must be smooth as silk.

"Before we finish the movement, let me interject with a theory of mine. In this movement, there are an extraordinary number of transitions from short notes to long notes, and vice versa. The selection of bowings must be made very carefully so that these changes are not abrupt. A fine example is the final seven bars of the movement which build to a massive climax." He demonstrated even while he was speaking.

"The seventh and sixth bars before the end are practically a bar to the bow. Then we reduce it to two bows to the bar, and then four to the bar, then two 16th notes followed by separate bows."

Some "hi-jinks" between Harth and Alexander Schneider.

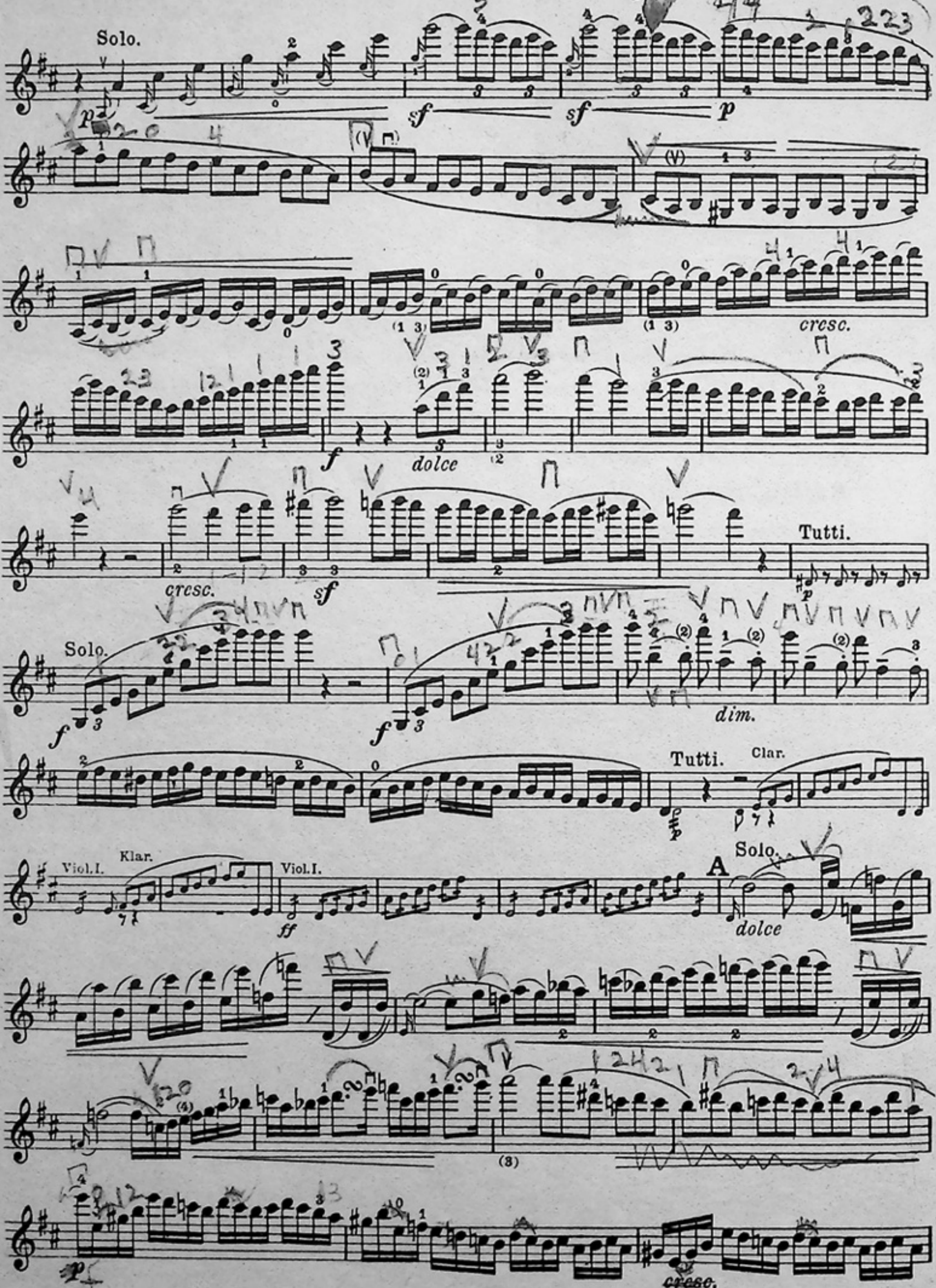
(Left to right) composer-tuba virtuoso, Philip Catelinet, for whom Vaughn Williams wrote a concerto; noted jazz band leader, Stan Kenton; Harth and conductor Chauncey Kelley, Pittsburgh.

We were much impressed with the suaveness and intensity of Harth's climax.

Sidney Harth's repertoire is prodigious, and it is child's play for him to perform a half dozen different major concertos in public during a single season, while still pursuing his arduous chores as a conductor and concertmaster. In addition to the staples of the classical and romantic repertoire, he will run the gamut from a soloist-conductor role in Vivaldi's "The Seasons," join with noted colleagues in Brahm's 'Double Concerto" or Beethoven's "Triple Concerto," and/or perform such contemporaries as the Concerto No. 2 by Bartok and the Walton Concerto.

He also champions the cause of modern American composers, and among his more than 25 listed recordings is a superb discing of Elwell's brilliant "Concert Suite" with the Louisville Orchestra, an item prized by knowledgeable violin disc collectors everywhere. And the Harth performances of the violin solos in recent recordings by Zubin Mehta and the Los Angeles Philharmonic, namely, Richard Strauss' "Ein Heldenleben" and the Rimsky-Korsakoff "Scheherazade," are ranked among the finest available.

Our interview had been thoroughly enjoyable, thanks to Harth's articulate formulations and willingness to cooperate, and we wished him well in his chosen endeavor.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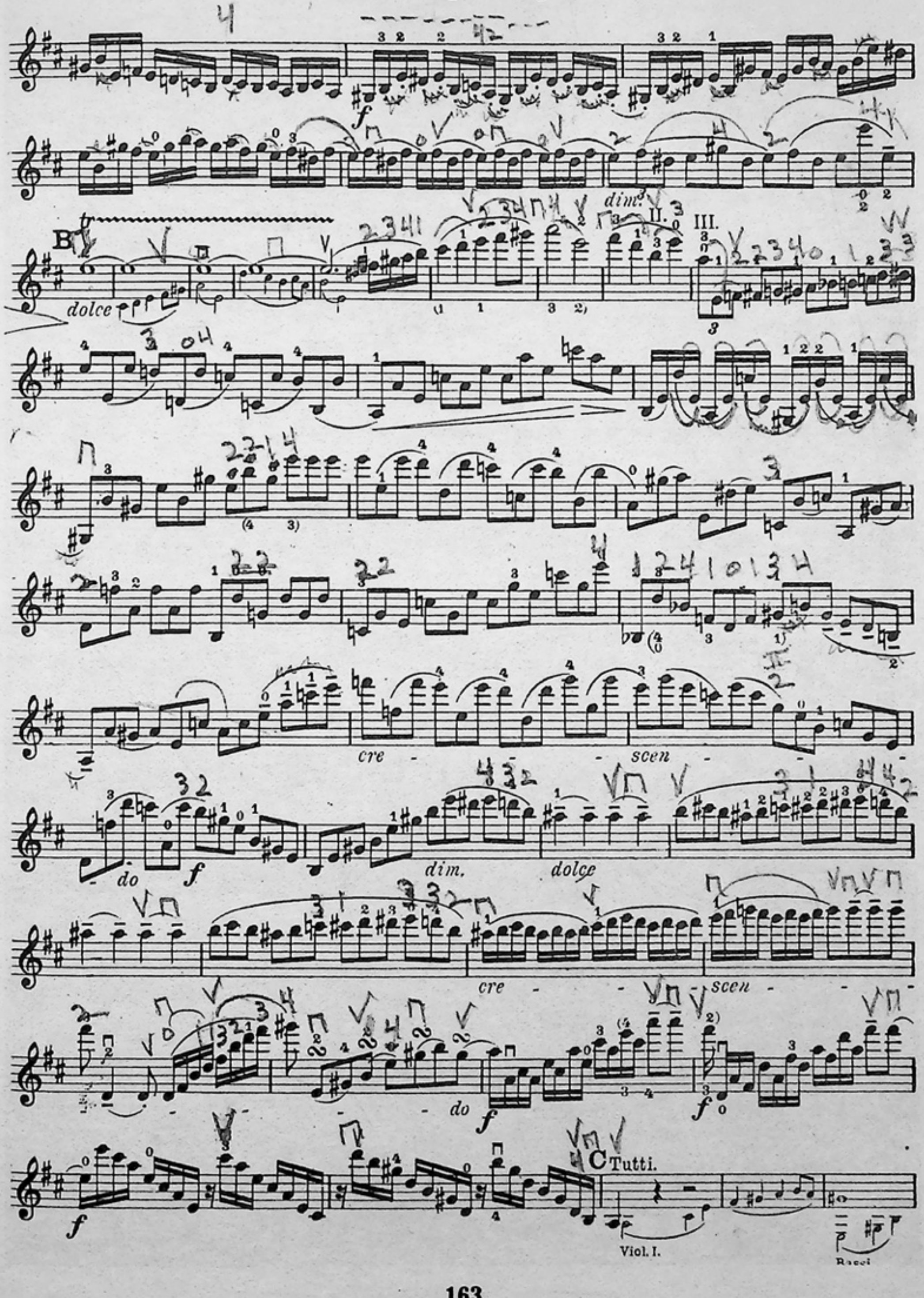
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Viol. I.
Bassi

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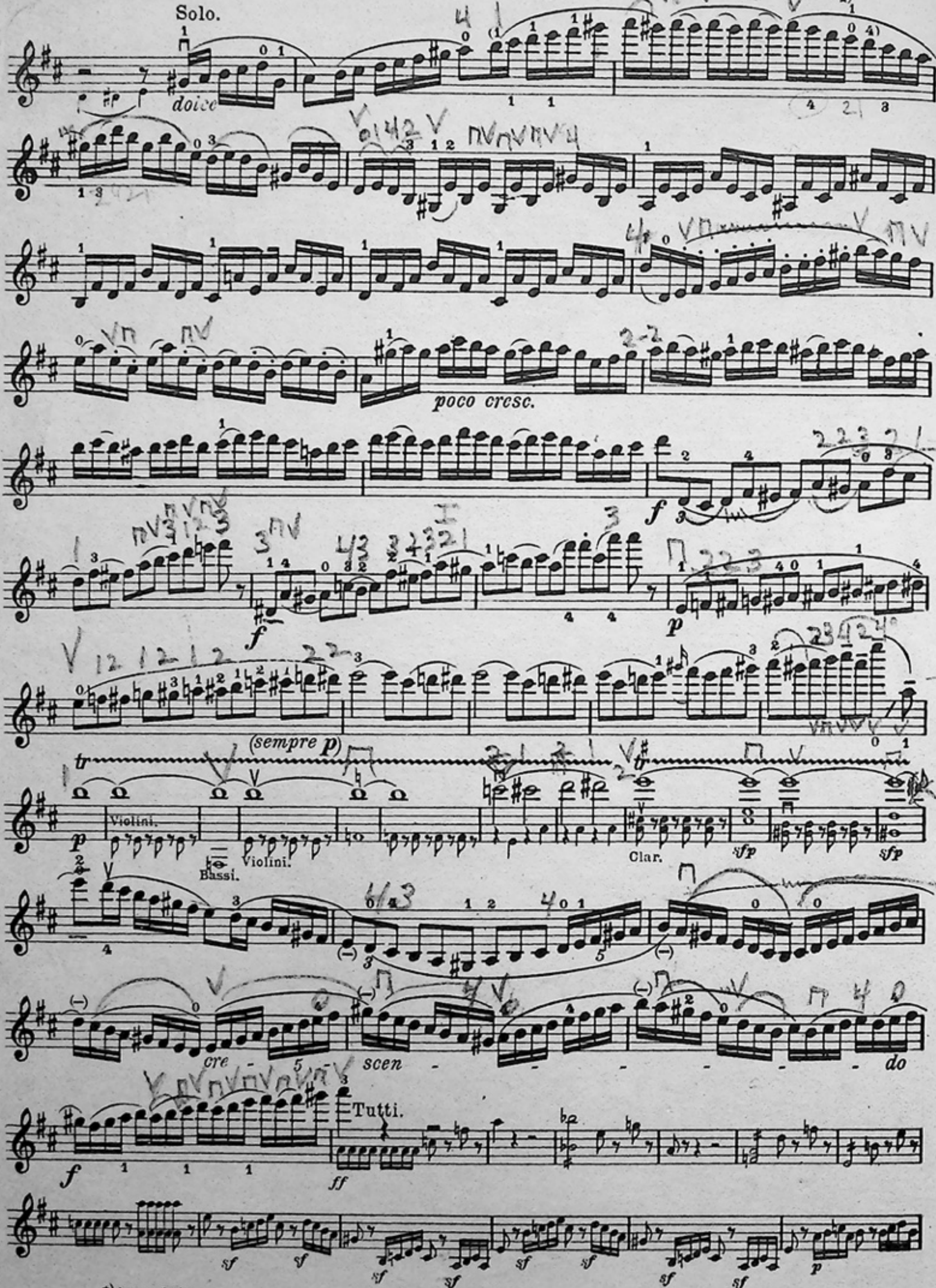

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*) leere Saite

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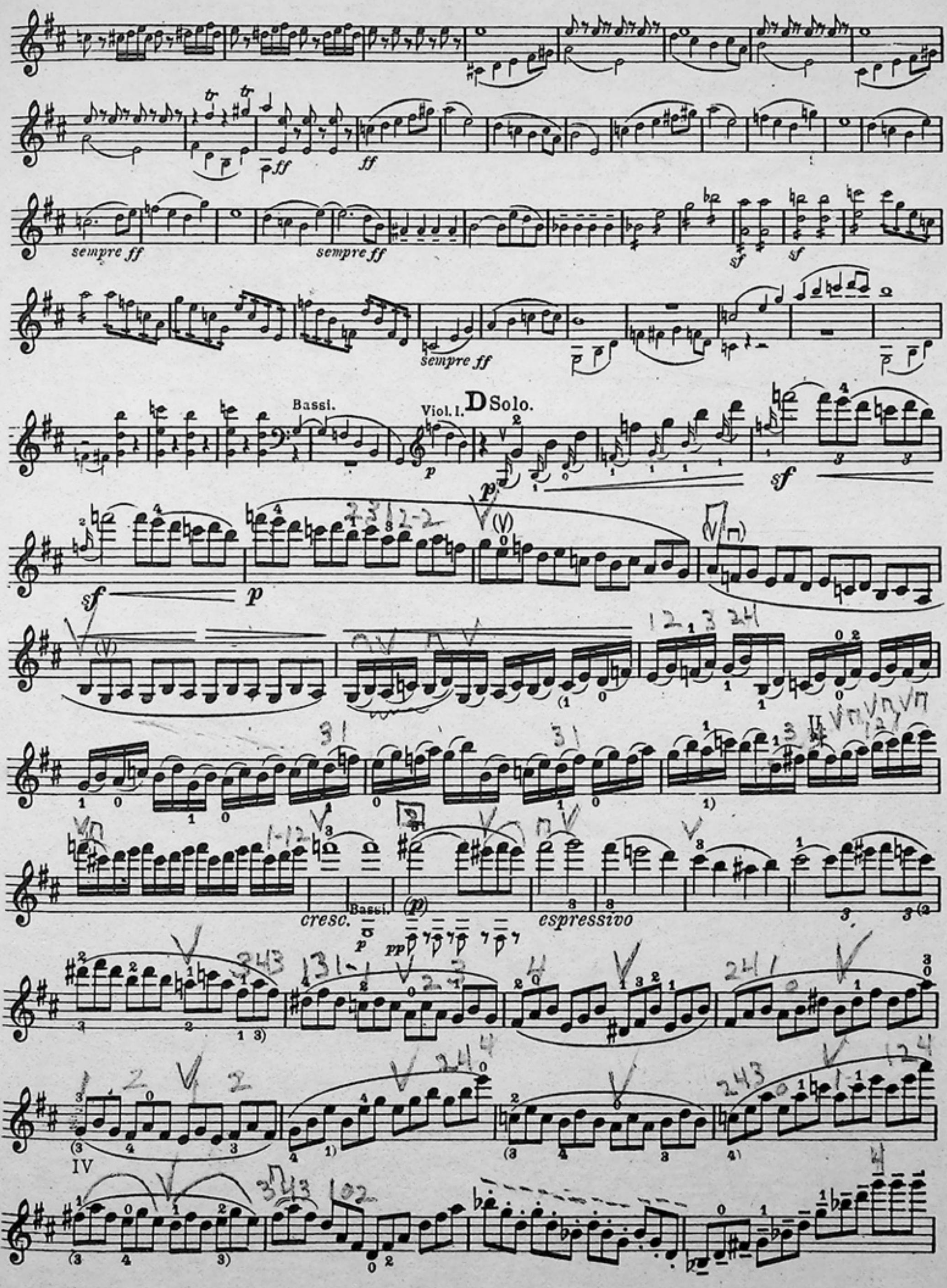
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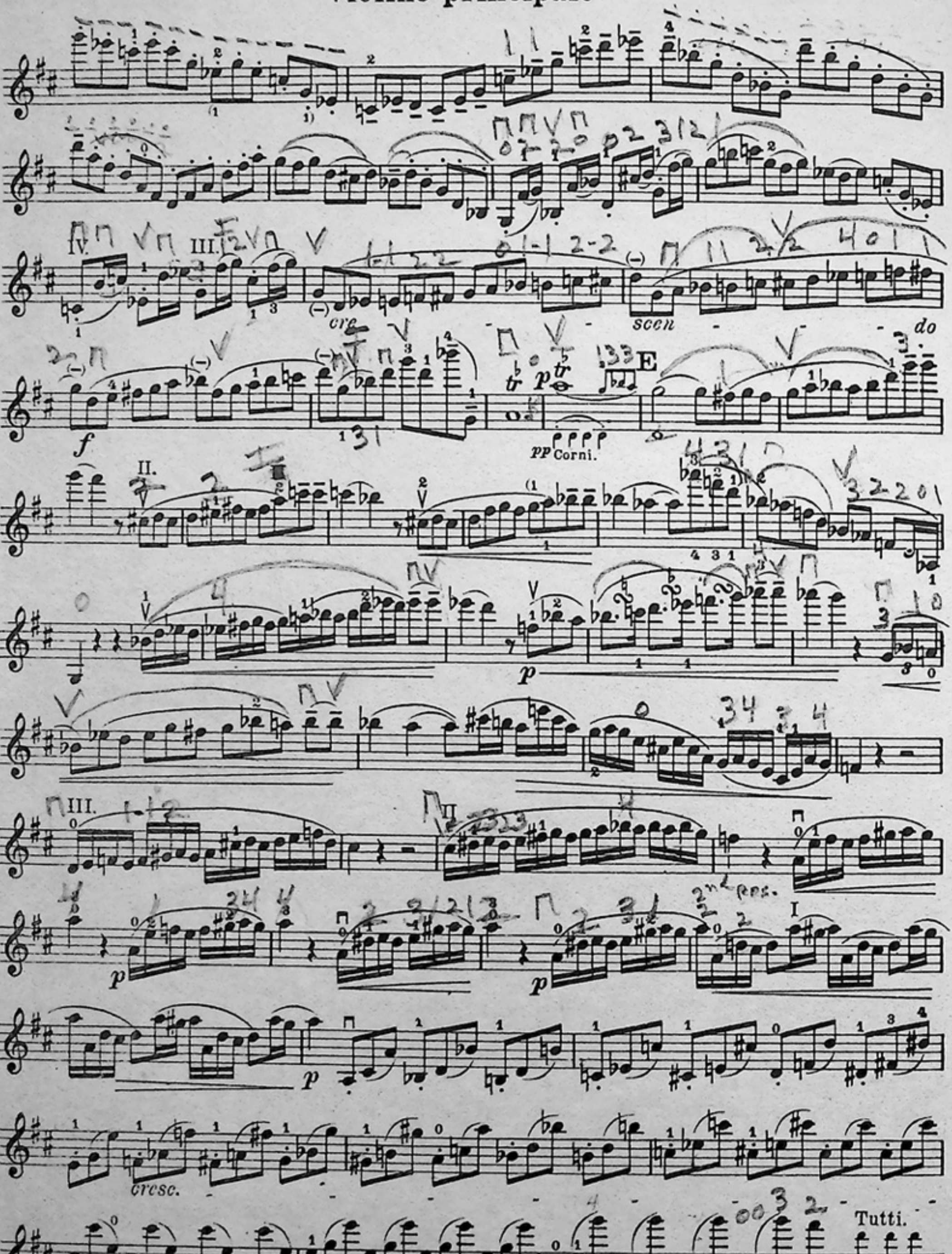
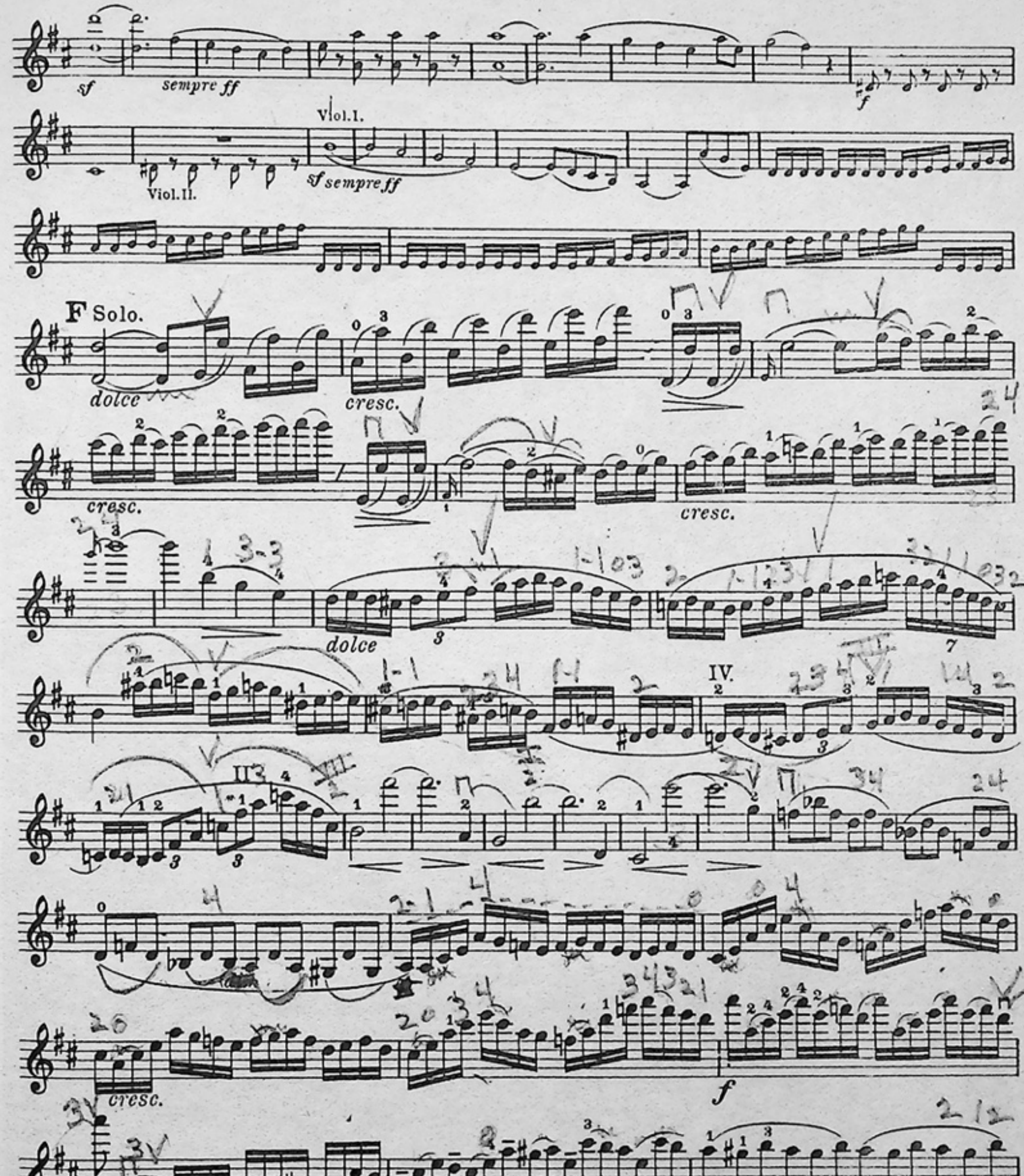
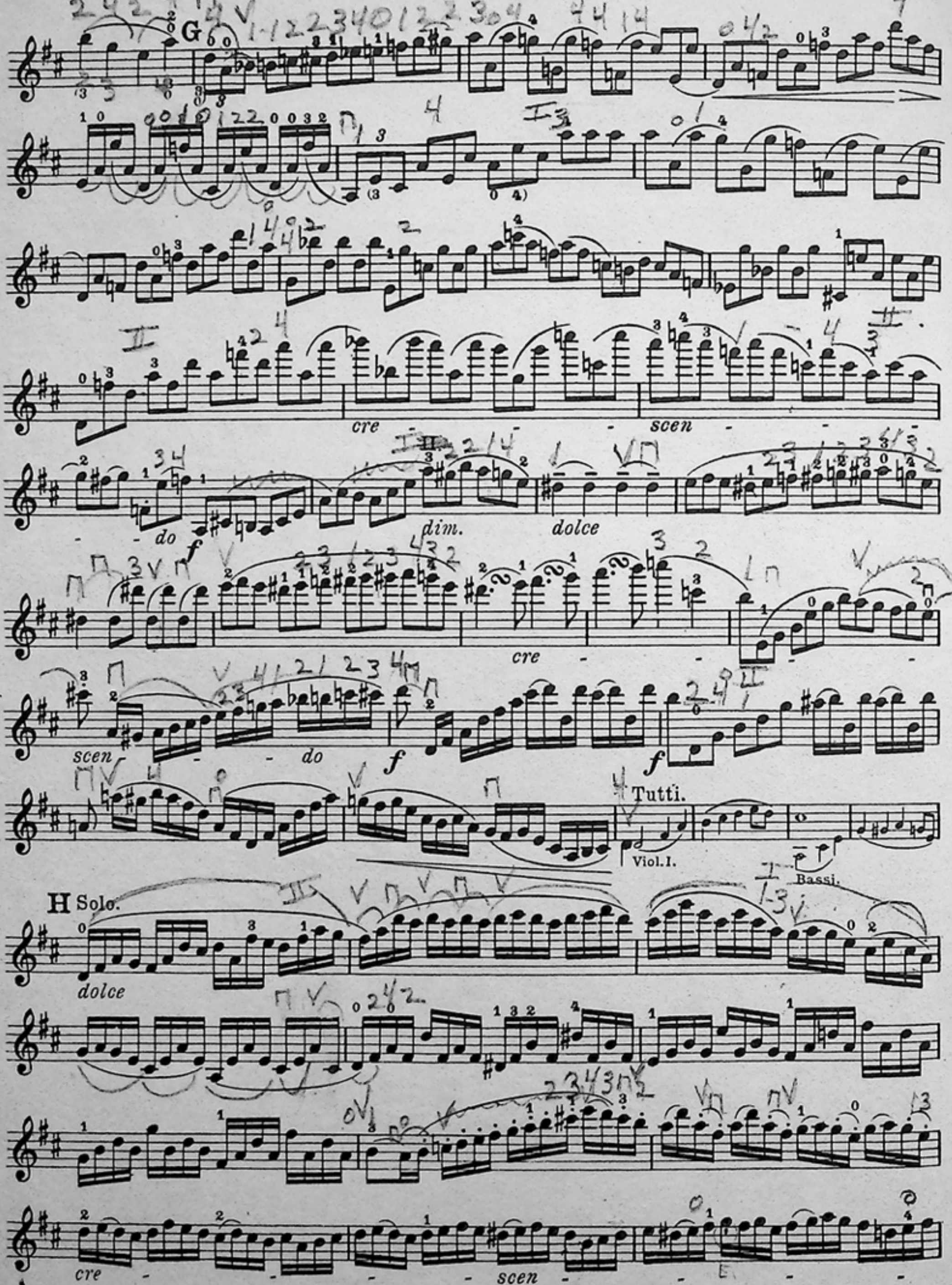
Violino principale



Violino principale

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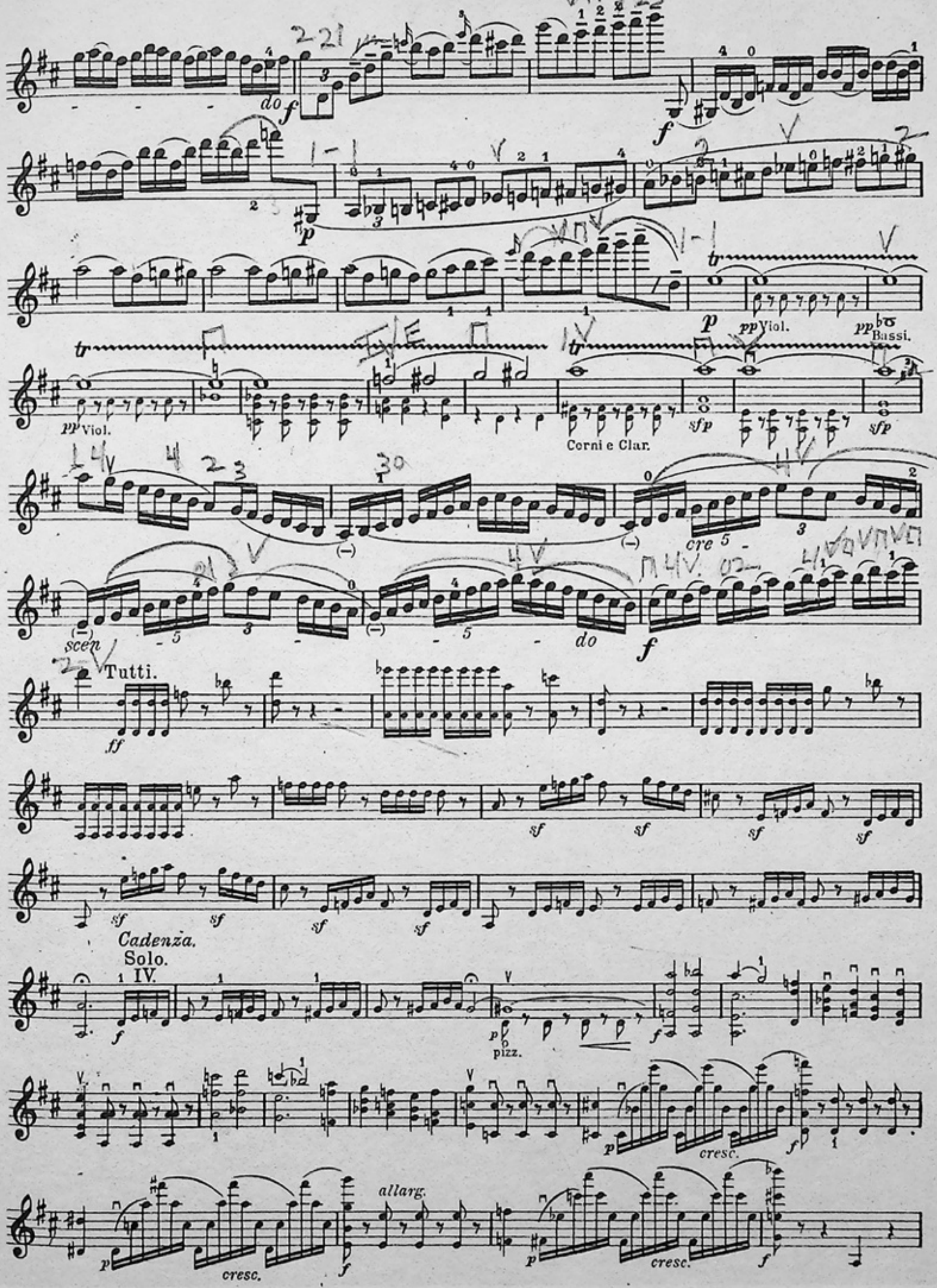
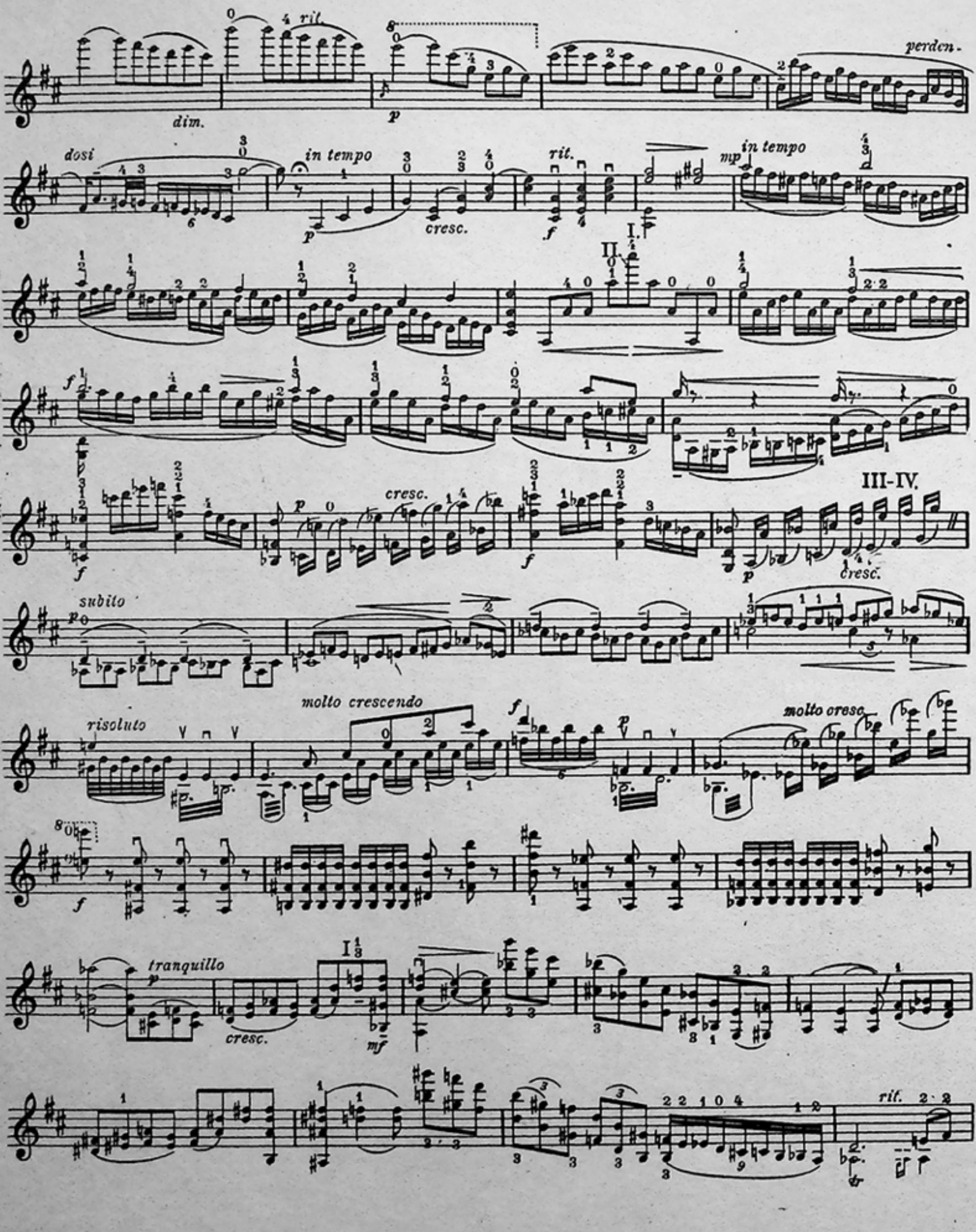
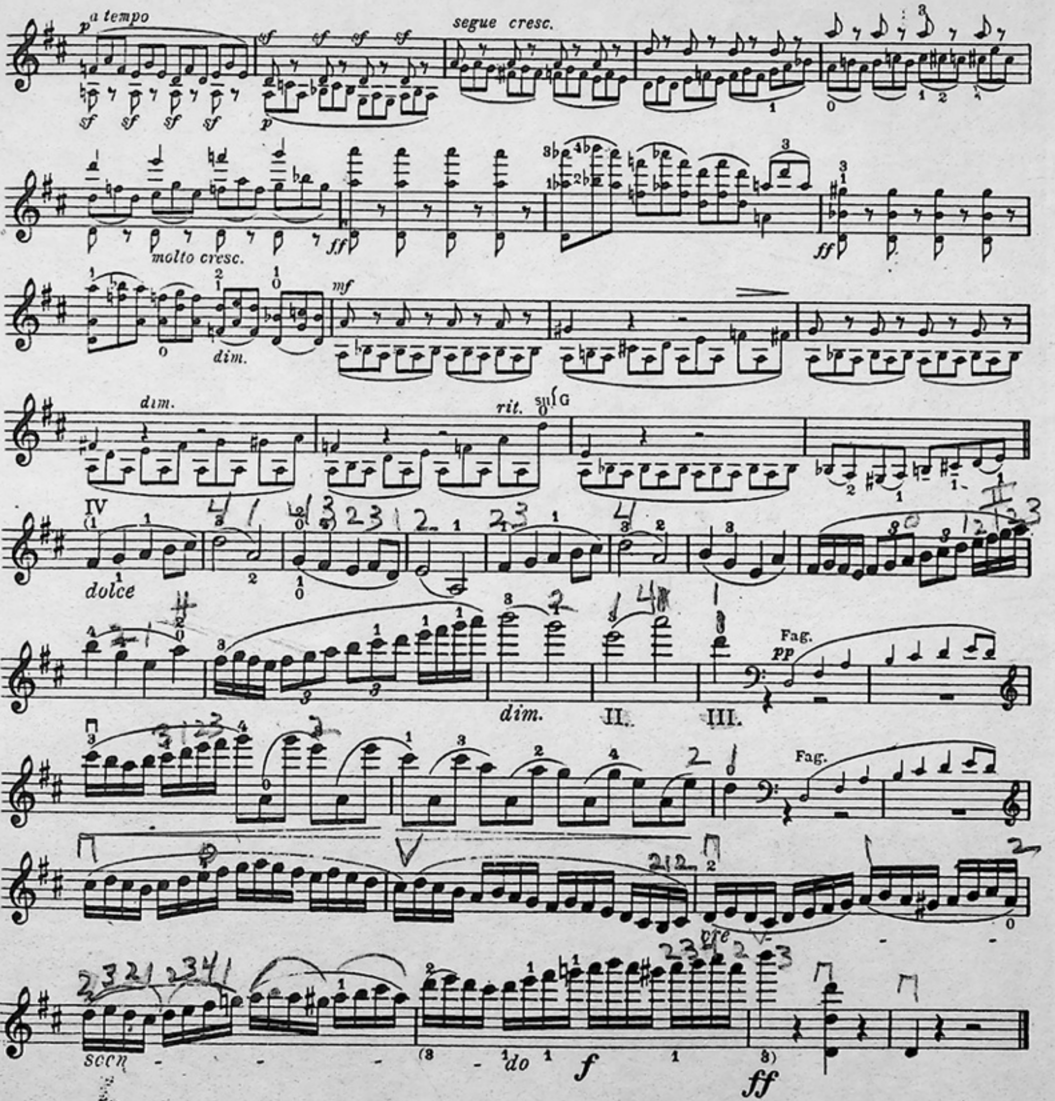
Violino principale



Violino principale



Violino principale



Vladimir Spivakov

Vladimir Spivakov was born September 12, 1944, in Ufa, a city of about a quarter-million population in the Ural region of the U.S.S.R. He was first given piano lessons by his mother, after which his parents wanted him to take up the cello. However, the young Spivakov favored the violin and began study of that instrument at the age of six and a half. His first teacher was a Madame Siegel. Later he became a student of Professor Veniamin Sher at the Leningrad Conservatory, and ultimately he studied with the noted pedagogue Professor Yankelevitch at the Moscow Conservatory for eight years. Among his competition awards are a first prize at the Montreal International Violin Competition, second prize in the Moscow Tchaikovsky Competition (1970), second prize at the Genoa Paganini Competition (1967) and fourth prize in the Marguerite Long-Jacques Thibaud Competition at Paris.

David Oistrakh once described the playing of his young colleague in these words: "His performance is characterized by a delicate and profound understanding of the style of the rendered composition, refined taste, faultless virtuoso technique and bright artistic temperament."

Spivakov has performed extensively in the U.S.S.R. and toured with exceptional success throughout Japan, Hungary, Italy, France, Scandinavia and Canada. His American debut was made during the 74-75 season. Special interests of Spivakov include painting, which he studied formally for six years, architecture and psychology.

We had been following Vladimir Spivakov's career in the United States for nearly three years with steadily increasing interest. Throughout the past 20 years quite a few splendidly equipped Soviet violinists have come to the U.S.A., but only a few have been unqualifiedly successful. Even some *first-prize* winners of the prestigious Moscow Tchaikovsky Competition failed to return for major American appearances after one or two tours. For all their virtuosic proclivities, many American observers have felt these Soviet artists lacked that personalized aura which ensures a permanent audience following, at least in the Western world.

Vladimir Spivakov with Dr. Samuel and the late Sada Applebaum.

Spivakov and Applebaum in an affectionate pose.

But Spivakov, who regularly sells out the box office in Moscow, has enjoyed an extraordinary reception from both American audiences and critics. Indeed, most of his reviews have been 'rave' notices or close to it. Thus far he has performed in New York five times in two and a half years, the same in Chicago, three times in two years in San Francisco, and his engagements and re-engagements continue to proliferate in the West. His reputation along the professional violinists' 'grapevine' has been burgeoning, and more than a few have felt him to be a violinist who possesses certain characteristics that recall Heifetz.

We wanted to know more about this rising new star, and he was happy to visit with us at the elegant seaside home of Dr. and Mrs. Herbert R. Axelrod in Deal, New Jersey.

The young Russian Jewish violinist, who cuts a striking figure on stage, is of medium height, dark haired, and has the lithe, slender figure of a fencing master. Though into his 30's, his appearance is unusually youthful, and while one cannot say that his physiognomy directly resembles that of the perenially youthful Nathan Milstein, those who can remember Milstein at a like age may well notice some similarities in their general image.

Spivakov's manner is serious, yet neither stiff nor formal; he communicates calmly and precisely, but one can easily sense a fervid temperament lurking just beneath the surface. His English is haltingly conversational, and when he needed to express ideas with any degree of complexity, we resorted to Dr. Axelrod's able assistance as translator.

We asked Spivakov about his early years of study.

"I owe much to my first teacher, Mme. Siegel (he spelled her first name: L-u-b-o-v-i-t-c-h-). She was a wonderful teacher, a pupil of Leopold Auer, and I have always felt an affinity toward the Auer violinistic tradition through her training. One of the invaluable things she taught me right from the beginning was usage of the vibrato in its various aspects; finger, wrist and arm, to sing on the violin. She was also a teacher of Boris Gutnikov (a past first-prize winner of the Tchaikovsky Competition). Her death was a particularly sad occasion for me. I next studied with Professor Sher at the Leningrad Conservatory."

"Did your parents have to force you to practice?"

"Yes. However, both of my parents worked, so I was left to my own devices a good deal of the time. In those years, I'm afraid I did not work as hard as I should have. Even then I had a passion for reading and spent many hours delving into literature. Later on I became interested in painting, architecture, sports, and"—he smiled—"girls. I spent some time learning boxing, and I became fascinated with painting—especially landscapes in oil and water colors. I studied it for six years and considered making it my profession."

Examining the jacket of a Spivakov recording are Applebaum, Spivakov, violist Paradise and Evelyn Axelrod.

"The first twenty minutes of each practice period are by far the most important."

"But what about the violin; how long did you practice, for instance, when you were 10 years old?"

"By that time I was practicing about three hours a day. I admit that previously I lost much valuable time that should have been applied to the violin because I was involved with too many other things. But then gradually my love for the violin grew to be all-important, and I no longer needed to be prodded to practice."

"What about your general education?"

"I had a normal high school education. You see, in the Soviet Union, cultural studies are combined with the regular curriculum. The idea is that if young hopefuls in the cultural arts eventually prove to lack the degree of talent necessary for a career in their preferred fields, they have the basic education to take up another profession. I do think, though, that every music student can profit immensely from the study of art and architecture, and I strongly recommend this.

"I became interested in psychology. One book in this field that has had a lasting influence on me, by a Professor Bertove, stressed that the first twenty minutes of each practice period are by far the most important and that after that one begins to practice with the muscles and not the brain. Stanislavsky, too, emphasized in one of his books—I forget which—that when the mental processes are not an integral part of the physical manipulation in practicing, the practice has little value. This applies to any type of performing artist, musical or otherwise."

"We know of your study with the famous Professor Yankelevitch and your great esteem for his teaching methods. What are some of the things you learned in your eight years under his tutelage?"

"First let me emphasize that Professor Yankelevitch was the single greatest inspiration in my musical life. He was the kind of pedagogue who recognized and understood the basic problems of each individual student, and he would invent exercises to fit each student's special needs. For example, I had a major weakness in my bow arm, and he prescribed exercises using different parts of the bow and different lengths of the bow: legato, detaché, martélé and every conceivable bowing stroke to cure my disability. He even taught me the varied uses of the right hand fingers for total control of the bow."

"Did he teach each pupil to hold the bow in the same way, like Joachim?"

"Not at all. Yankelevitch always took into account the physiological makeup of the individual student and sought to build his technical equipment according to his physical structure in a personalized manner. His passing in 1973 was an irreparable loss to violin pedagogy."

"Which etudes did you study?"

" I went through all the important basic studies—Kreutzer, though I can't say I enjoyed all the variations, Rode, Fiorillo, Gavinies, Dont, which I considered to have special value, and later, Ernst, Paganini and Wieniawski."

"At what age did you first play in public?"

"I was 13, but I don't remember what I played. One of my early successes came when I was 16, at a competition during the Leningrad White Night Festival. I was below the minimum age limit and not permitted official entry into the competition, but they let me play anyway. Then they broke the rules and awarded me first prize."

"What did you perform?"

"I cannot recall the pieces, but I do remember that there were two, with piano accompaniment."

"Do you still practice scales daily?"

"No, I prefer to maintain my technique by working on difficult passages from a large variety of compositions."

We noted the exceptional flexibility and broad extension of Spivakov's hands. "Do you have any special personal exercises for flexibility?"

"Yes, but it is not anything I do with my hands in the muscular sense—it's all a mental process. However, I will tell you one theory that I adhere to, although I freely admit it was conceived long before I was ever born."

"And what is that?"

"I am talking about the relationship of the left elbow to the fourth finger. It is very important, I think, that no matter in what position one is playing, the elbow should be directly under the fourth finger, even when the elbow must go farther to the left or right of the violin when one is going up and down the fingerboard."

Spivakov in a classic pose. Note how he holds the palm of his left hand against the violin—a practice employed by many extraordinary violin technicians.

Spivakov admires one of the superb Guarnerius violins from the personal collection of Dr. Herbert Axelrod.

He demonstrated. "You see," he continued, "The elbow must serve as an anchor, regardless of the position of the fingers, and should be used to influence finger, wrist or hand movements."

"What violin and bow do you use?"

"My violin is a beautiful-sounding Gobetti, but my bow is from an inexpensive German maker."

"Who were the violinists that most inspired you in your formative years?"

Spivakov responded slowly and carefully. "Menuhin, Oistrakh, Heifetz and Stern—all four of them!"

"Tell us about your repertoire."

"I play all of the standard repertoire, including many of the baroque concertos, including those by Nardini, Tartini and Vivaldi, as well as the D-Major by Haydn. Among the virtuoso concertos, I play the Ernst, and after I heard Heifetz play the Conus concerto, I learned it. Along with the major concertos, Beethoven, Brahms, Sibelius, Tchaikovsky and all the rest, I play concertos by Soviet composers—the two by Prokofiev, the Shostakovich First Concerto and those by Khatchaturian and Krennikov. And my repertoire of sonatas, chamber music and smaller pieces is extensive. Soviet training demands that the student master an extremely wide repertoire."

Spivakov has not yet emerged as a prolific recording artist at this writing, but we knew he had produced some recordings for Mezhdunarodnaya Kniga in the U.S.S.R. We asked him about them.

"Yes," he affirmed. "I have made about ten records. In fact, they sold very quickly at home, and I have only one or two of each myself. Among them are Bartok's 'Rhapsody No. 1,' 'the Locatelli-David Sonata, the Paganini-Kreisler 'Witches Dance', Prokofiev's 'Five Melodies' and the Shchedrin-Tziganov 'In Imitation of Albeniz.' All have piano accompaniments by Victoria Postnikova (now a concertizing piano soloist, formerly married to Spivakov, currently wife of conductor Gennady Rohzdestvensky). I also have some chamber music recordings in consort with other Soviet musicians, as well as the Tchaikovsky and several classical concertos with orchestra.

"Yes, I have been engaged to record two Mozart Concerti with the English Chamber Orchestra which I will conduct myself."

"Do you have time to do any teaching, considering your busy schedule?"

"Yes. All Soviet-trained artists are expected to impart their knowledge to the upcoming generation. I take my role as a teacher very seriously and strive constantly to devise new ideas and methods to solve violinistic problems. At this time I have six students of conservatory level."

"How long are your lessons?"

"I am very free with my time and never watch the clock. I give whatever amount of time I feel is necessary to really help the pupil."

"Mr. Spivakov, in recent years in the United States, the number of young people taking up the violin with a serious view toward a professional career has dropped considerably. Do you find the same thing is happening in the Soviet Union?"

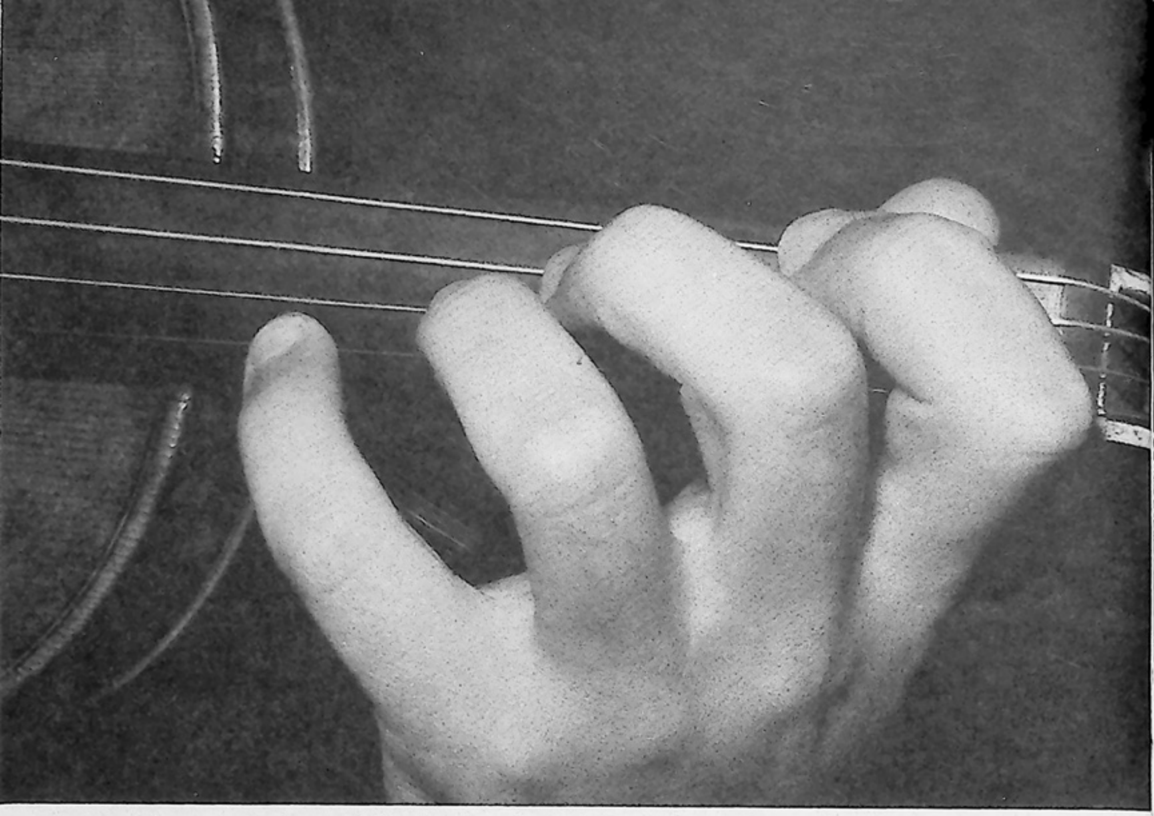
"No, not so far as I can see. Of course, I do not have any statistics here to substantiate this, but professional violin careers are still highly desired and sought after in the U.S.S.R. Our conservatories are full, teachers are busily engaged and there seems to be no shortage of pupils whatsoever."

"What is your opinion about the makeup of recital programs? Do you think they should be mainly oriented toward masterworks, as is so often the fashion in recent years?"

"No. I try to include as many styles and types of music as I can; masterworks, medium-length works and shorter pieces. I believe that a completely balanced program is more entertaining to the audience, and entertainment, as well as intellectual satisfaction, is a vital component of violin performance."

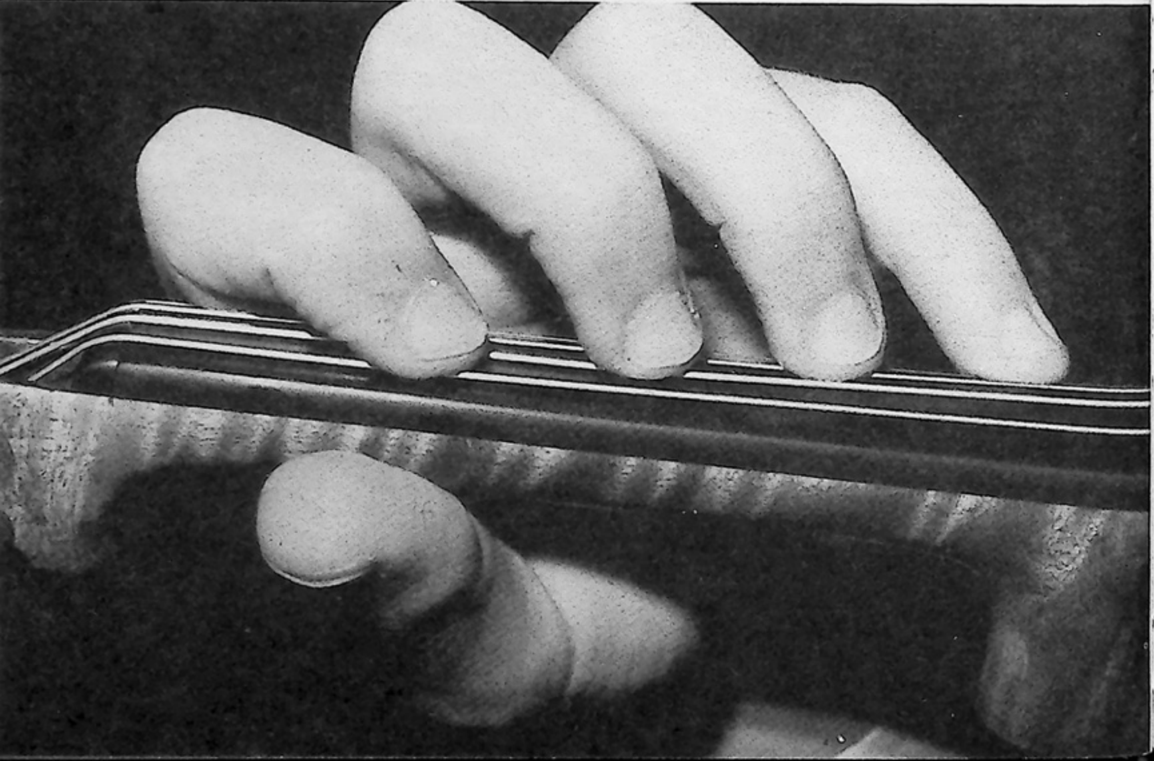
Spivakov had previously agreed to discuss a major work of the repertoire. Time limitations did not permit a bar-by-bar analysis but he was able to contribute some general remarks on interpretive approach. He selected Brahm's "Sonata No. 1 in G-major, Op. 78," one of his favorite opuses. He confessed to a particular interest in the music of Brahms. We asked him how this came about.

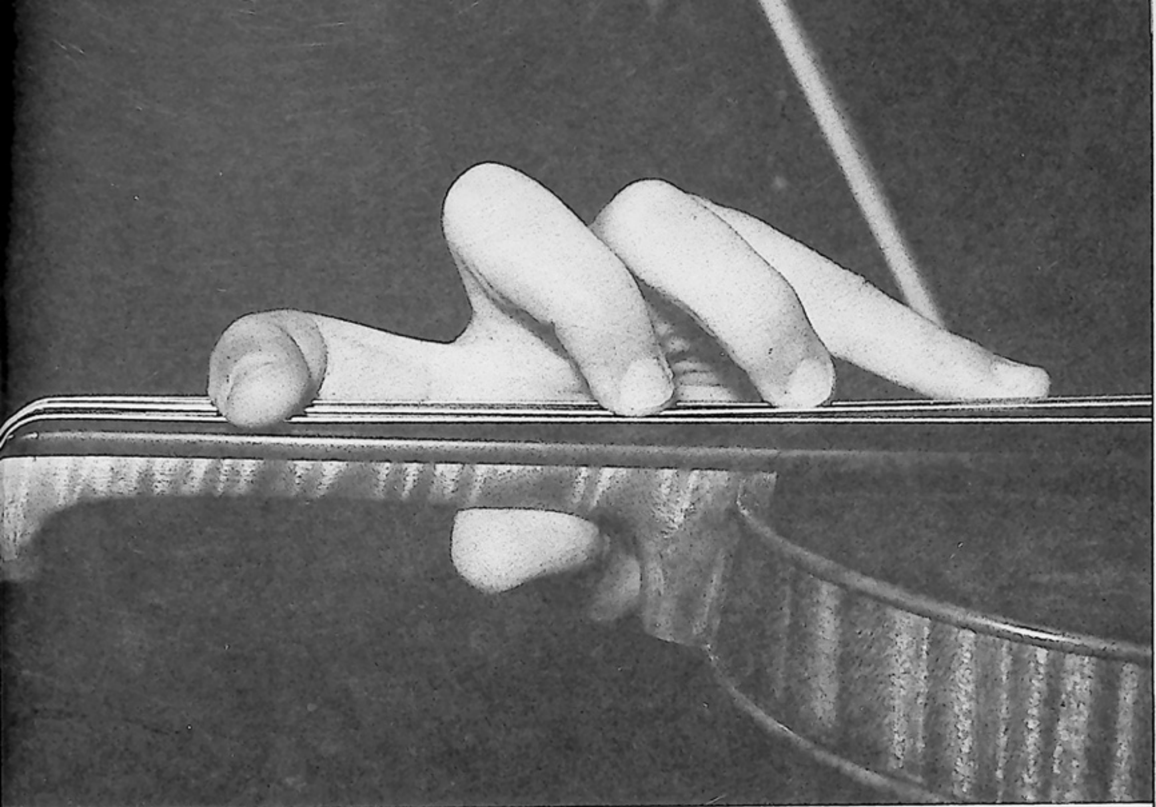
"It was after I heard the celebrated baritone Fischer-Dieskau sing a Brahms "Rain" song. I was so affected by his exquisite unveiling of its inner beauties that I determined to further investigate the violin music of Brahms, which, of course, I had played before. But now I fully immersed myself in these scores and restudied them.



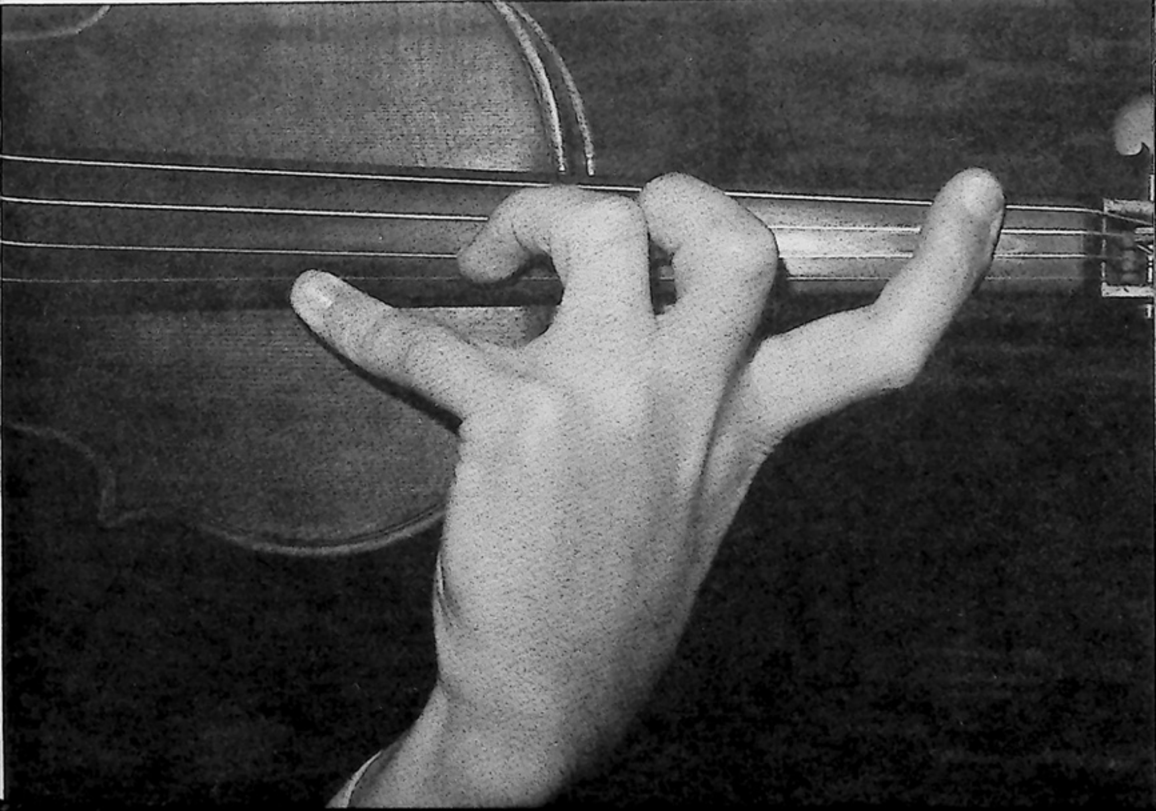
An overview of Spivakov's left hand position in repose.

View from the thumbside. Notice the relaxed, mobile thumb position.





Spivakov plays twelfths in the first position. Notice how the ball of the first finger is utilized.



Spivakov and Applebaum prepare to 'tee off' into a movement of the Bach "D-minor Double Concerto."

"One conclusion that I came to is that Brahms directions in the score must be scrupulously followed—I mean literally, as for example, his indications on the first page of the violin part in Op. 78, where it is marked, in one section, *con anima,* and in another, *sostenuto,* (Wiener Urtext Edition, 1973).

"What is your general approach to the first movement?"

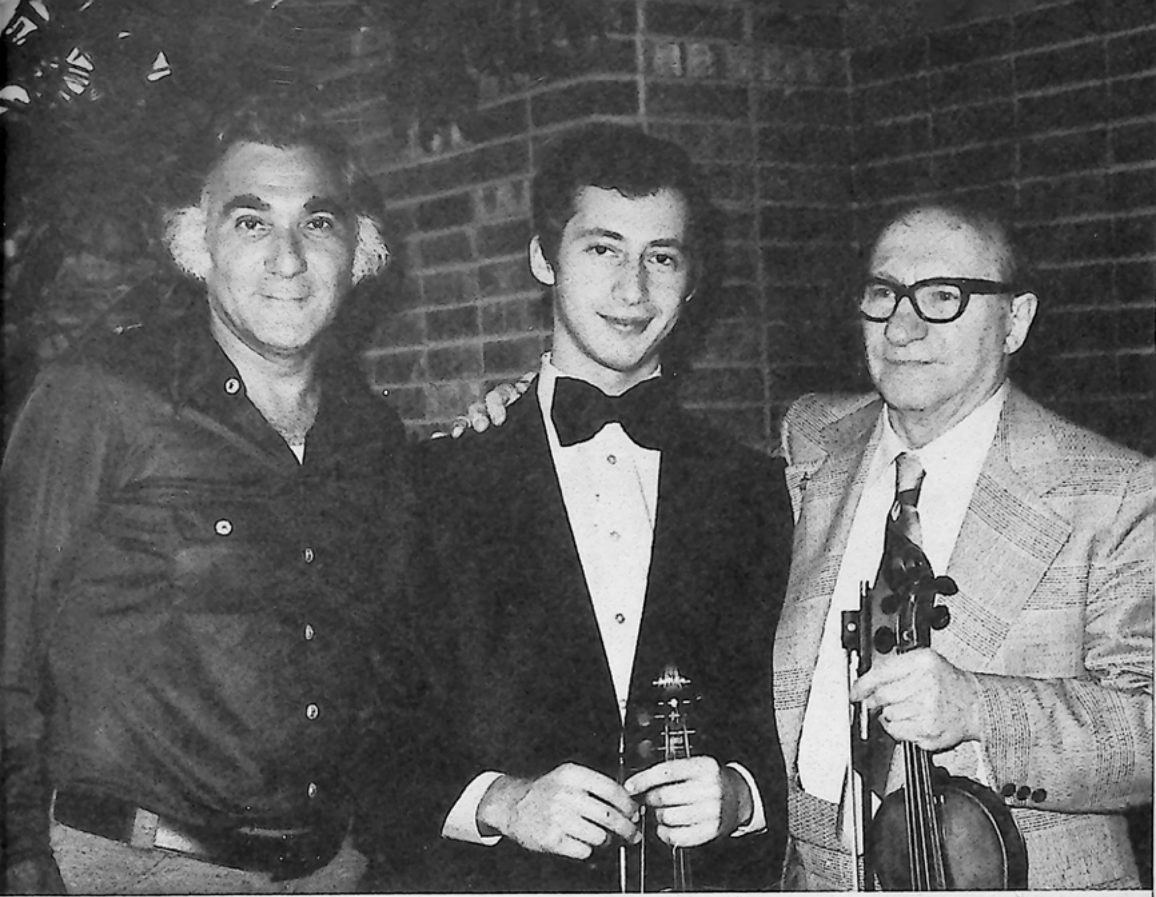
"For one thing, I think it is usually played too slowly and ponderously. May I tell you a little story about this movement?"

"Please do."

Spivakov in a jovial mood.

"I was on tour and had to stop over in a small country town. For some reason I was unable to sleep. The themes kept churning about ceaselessly in my head. As the sleepless hours passed, I grew more and more dissatisfied with my own past interpretation of the music. I felt something vital was missing. Then it came to me. What was lacking was a sense of pastoral serenity, such as to be found in a peaceful rural landscape—the air of quietude, the dew on the tall, softly rustling grass, the cool mist rising above the rich earth, with the piano occasionally emulating a bell tolling in the distance. I suppose this may sound overly romantic, but such things affect me profoundly, and I feel that my restless night helped to considerably mature my attitude toward the movement,

Serious music-making.



Axelrod, Spivakov and Applebaum after a Vivaldi "Concerto Grosso."

and indeed, the entire work. Of course, who knows—as time passes I may have reason once again to alter my philosophical view of the sonata."

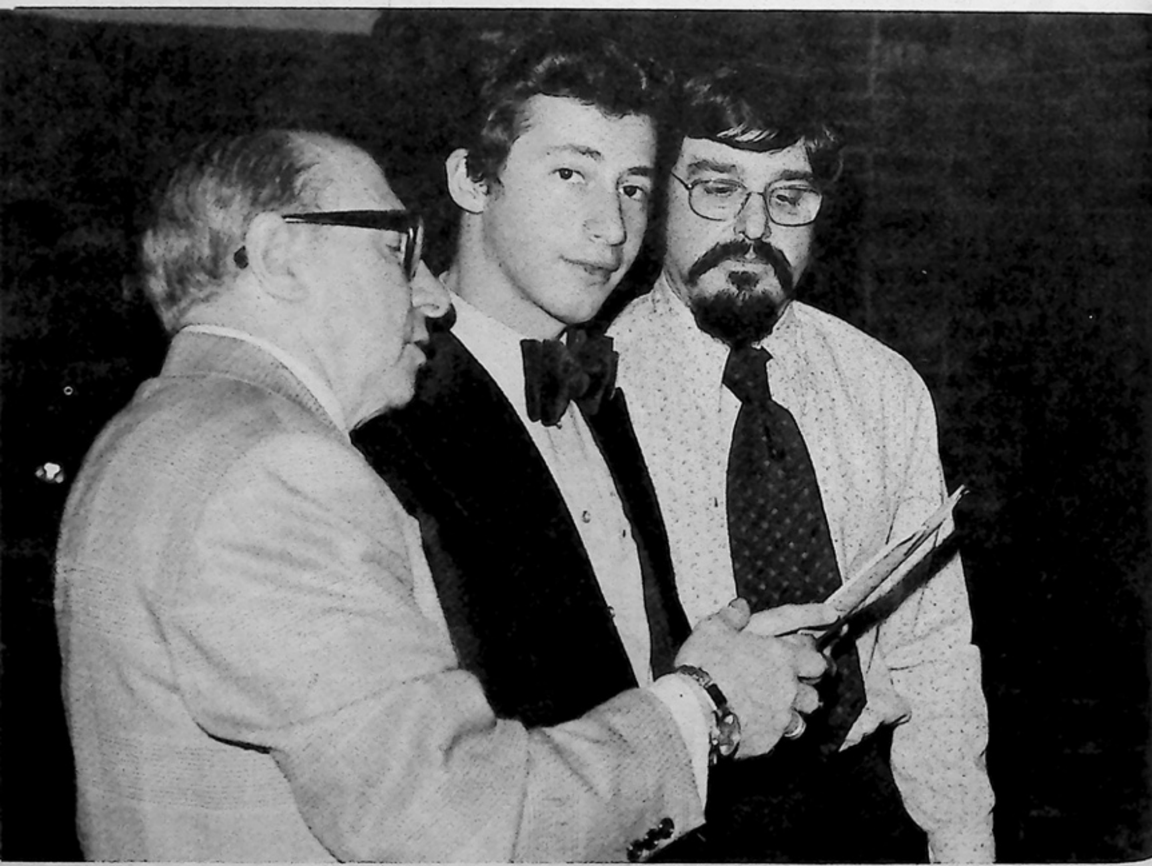
"Do you have any suggestion about the Adagio movement?"

"Yes. In contrast to the first movement, I feel the Adagio is usually played a bit too fast, and I probably play it slower than anyone else. (Spivakov sang the opening theme by way of illustration). I consider this to be deeply emotional music. It blends an aura of majesty with sensitive introspection (we had to carefully discuss this latter word so as to be certain it conformed precisely to Spivakov's meaning). It also contains an element of tragedy and many other facets of emotion. The collaborating pianist must be equally involved with the violinist in these nuances of mood and view the work in a similar perspective. I do not make a long pause between this movement and the finale."

"And the concluding *Allegro molto moderato*?"

"Here we have music of joy and affection. I might point out that I am careful never to rush any of the sixteenth notes, as is often done, and I am always alert to changes of character and color. Without these the sonata can be a dull affair. There is much opportunity for imaginative phrasing without violating the letter of the printed score. At times, the movement is lightly heroic—at other times, tranquil and modest. I believe in keeping things moving with a sense of freeness, but this is not fast music, and tempo-pushing should be avoided."

Spivakov looks up at the camera during an examination of the Brahms' "G-major Sonata" with Applebaum and Paradise.



Applebaum debates a point with Spivakov.

We could not resist a final question. "Briefly, how would you compare the present generation of Soviet violinists with their American colleagues?" We realized it was a potentially embarrassing question.

But Spivakov responded without hesitation. He said, "I believe that Soviet schooling is possibly superior on the virtuoso instrumental level, but American students are given broader musical exposure, as through chamber music and other ensemble playing. I think the ideal situation would be to strike a balance between the two approaches."

And so on this note of international rapprochement, we thanked Spivakov, wished him well and spent the rest of the evening listening to him play various violins.

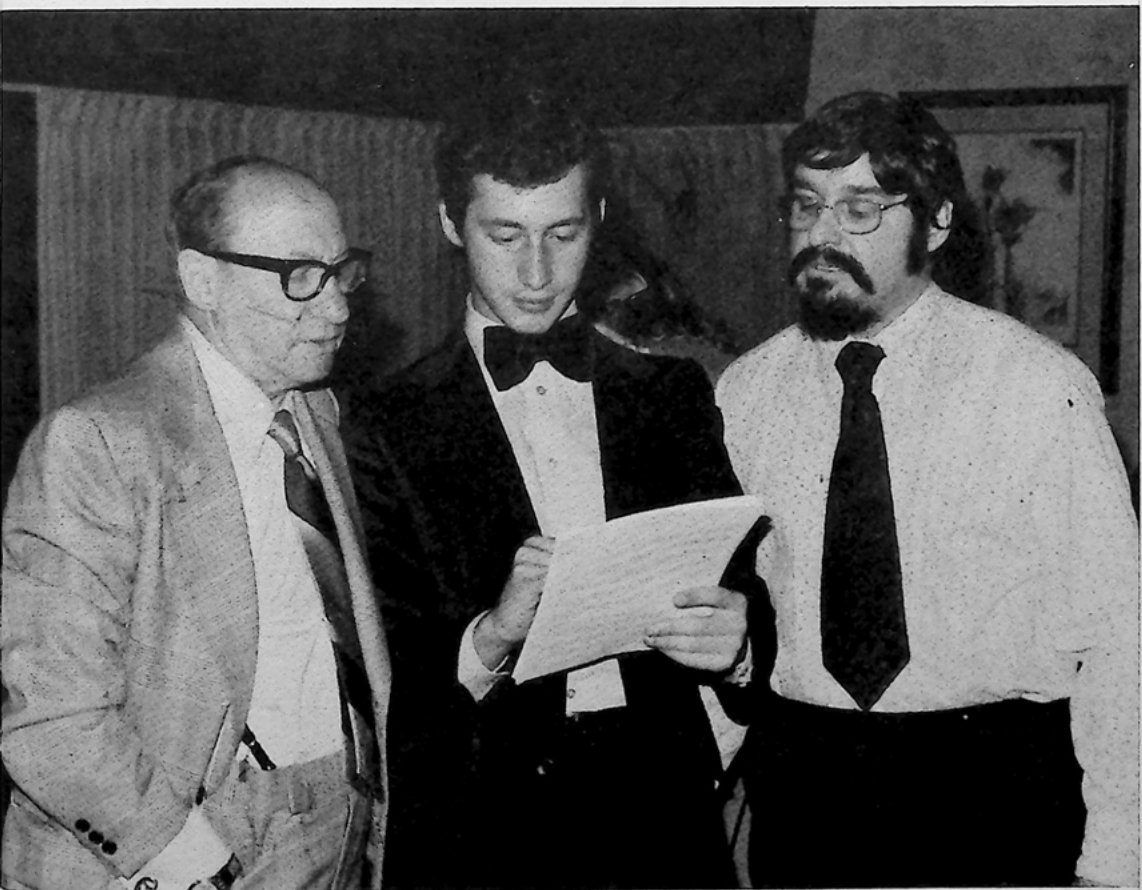
•••••••

The night after our visit with Spivakov, we were invited to attend his sold-out concert in Carnegie Hall. It isn't easy for a violinist, with a piano accompaniment, to fill such a large hall, but Spivakov does it regularly. When we got to the door of Carnegie, Dr. Axelrod was approached by two strange looking men who inquired as to the contents of his large leather bag. When it was explained that it was camera equipment with which to make some photos with Spivakov after the concert, he was politely but firmly requested to check the bag in the cloakroom or he would not be allowed to enter the Hall. "We're having dinner with Spivakov after the concert!" he protested. But to no avail.

As the concert was progressing and reached its climax with Spivakov doing an incredibly profound and sensitive reading of the Bach "Chaconne", a maniac in the front part of the theatre leaped to his feet screaming,"LET THE JEWS OUT OF RUSSIA . . . LET THE JEWS OUT OF RUSSIA" and ran towards Spivakov who continued playing as though in a trance. As the fanatic came within a few feet of Spivakov . . . and Spivakov kept playing . . . he hurled a rubber bag filled with red ink at Spivakov's face, missing by only a few inches. The projectile hit Spivakov square in the chest, splashing red dye all over his white shirt, dripping onto his tuxedo . . . with glistening drops on the violin itself. The hair of the bow quickly picked up the dye . . . but Spivakov kept playing. The hoodlum was dragged out of the hall . . . still screaming . . . but it didn't shake Spivakov noticeably at all. When the "Chaconne" was over, the audience went absolutely wild. Not only was the performance one of the greatest of the "Chaconne" we ever heard, but the courage and determination . . . and the control . . . manifested by Spivakov was absolutely unreal. The hooligan could have thrown a bomb . . . or knife . . . as well as a dye bubble!

During dinner, Spivakov was truly shaken. The impact didn't hit him until after the performance. He was so deeply involved in the "Chaconne" that he hardly even knew what was happening. Afterwards he was so nervous he couldn't hold a match to light his cigarette! He finished the concert with the splattered red shirt, the stained violin and bow . . . and the audience loved it. The attacker turned out to represent the Jewish Defense League and they protested that a Jewish violinist like Spivakov should enhance the Russian cause by concertizing on behalf of Russia. When this was explained to Spivakov, he shrugged his shoulders and said: "They are crazy. They don't understand what is happening in Russia. Jews have equal opportunities in Russia now. Under the Czars they were restricted to their ghetto and could not even leave town without special permission." Tears were in his eyes. It was obvious that he dearly loves his native land.

Spivakov explains his choice of a specific bowing and fingering sequence to Applebaum and Paradise.



Violine

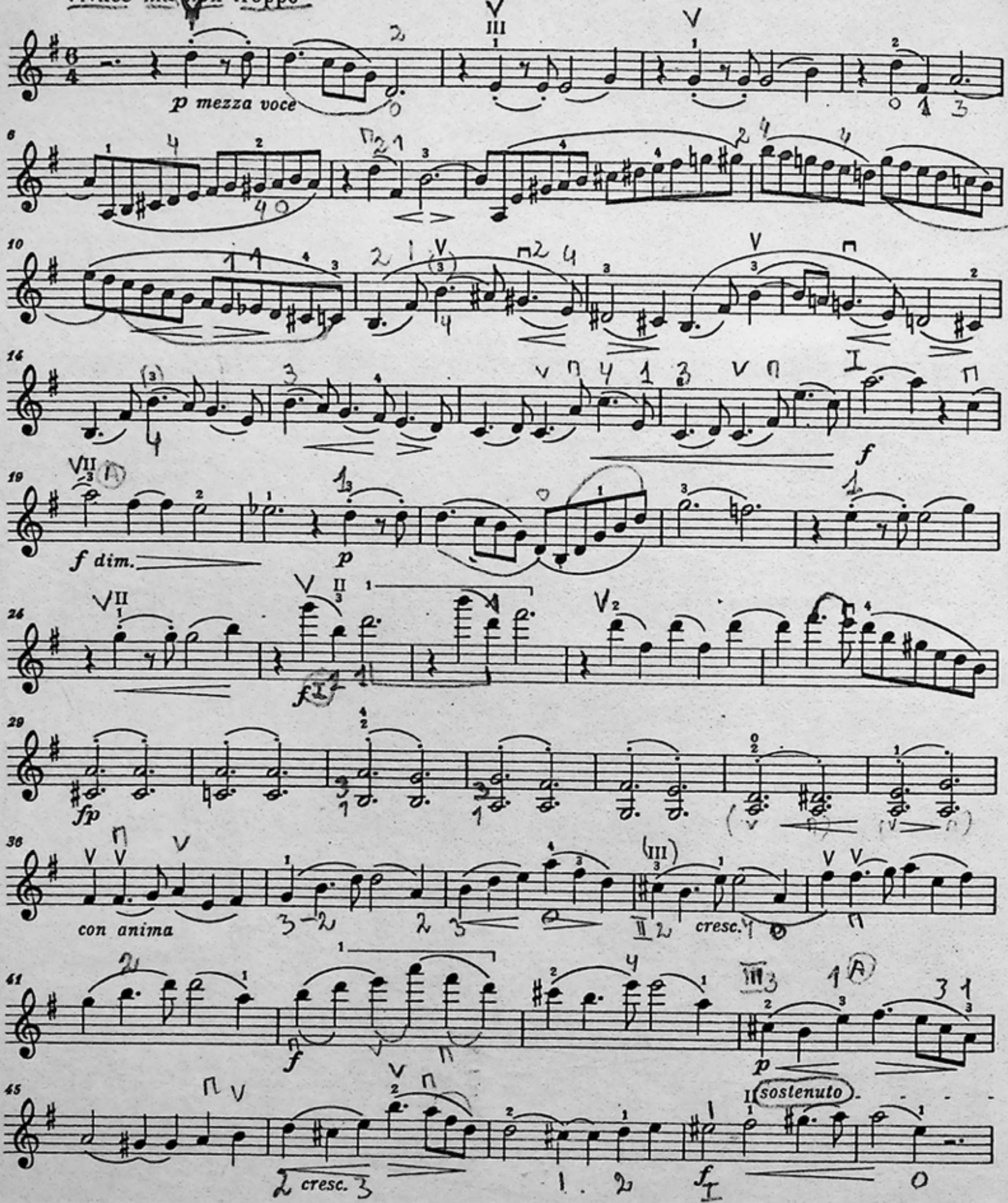
SONATE G-DUR

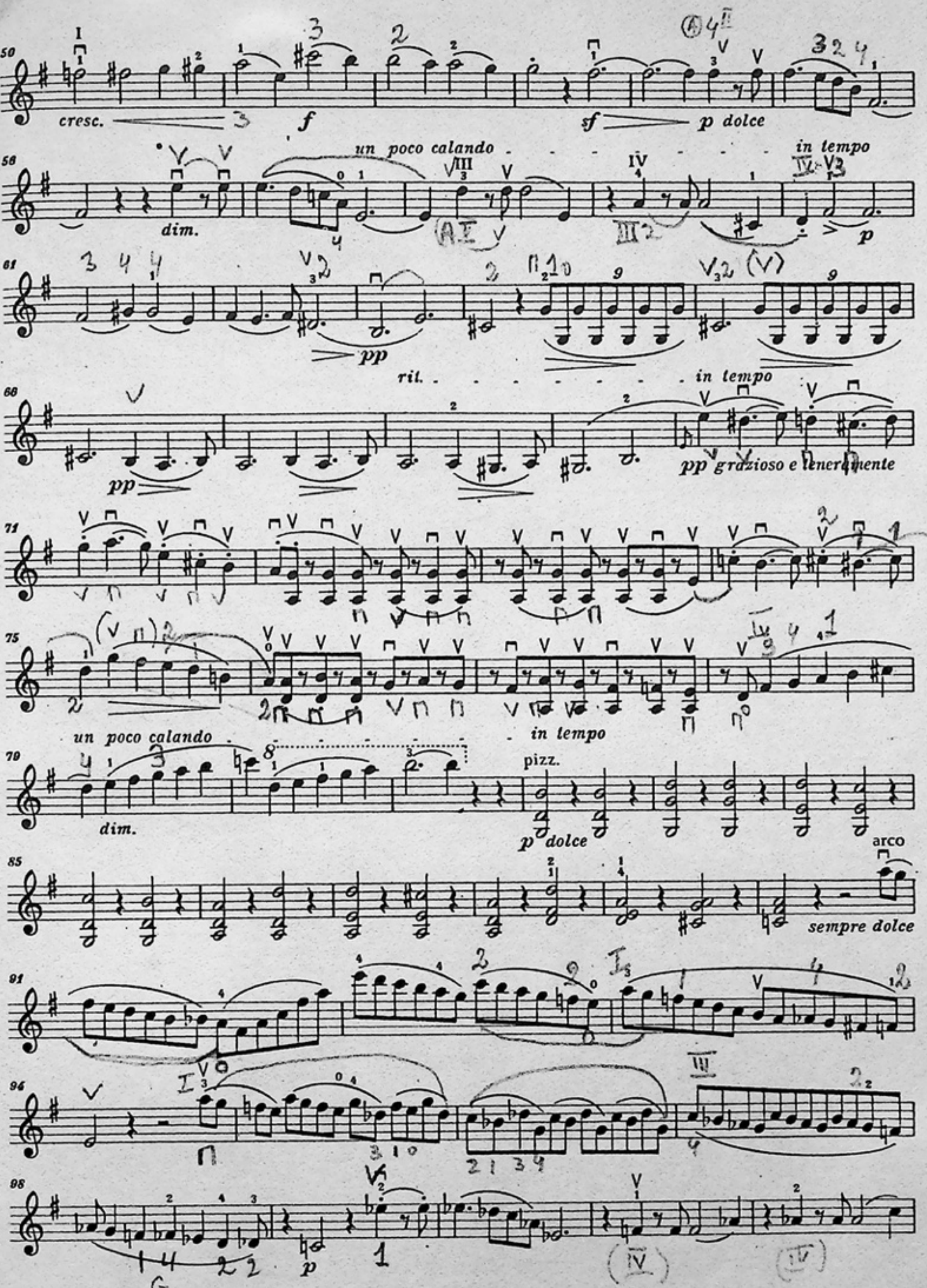
Opus 78

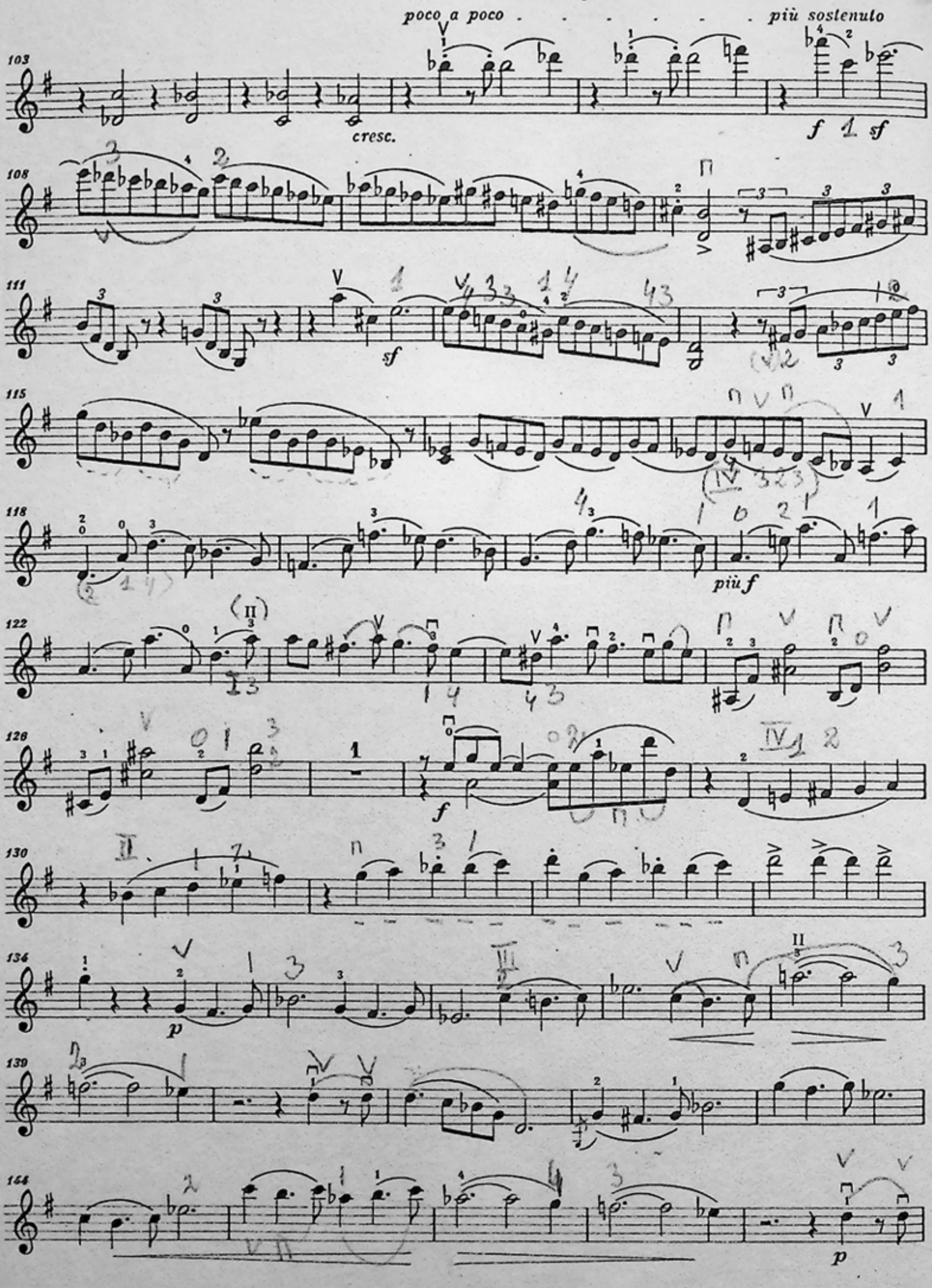
1878/79

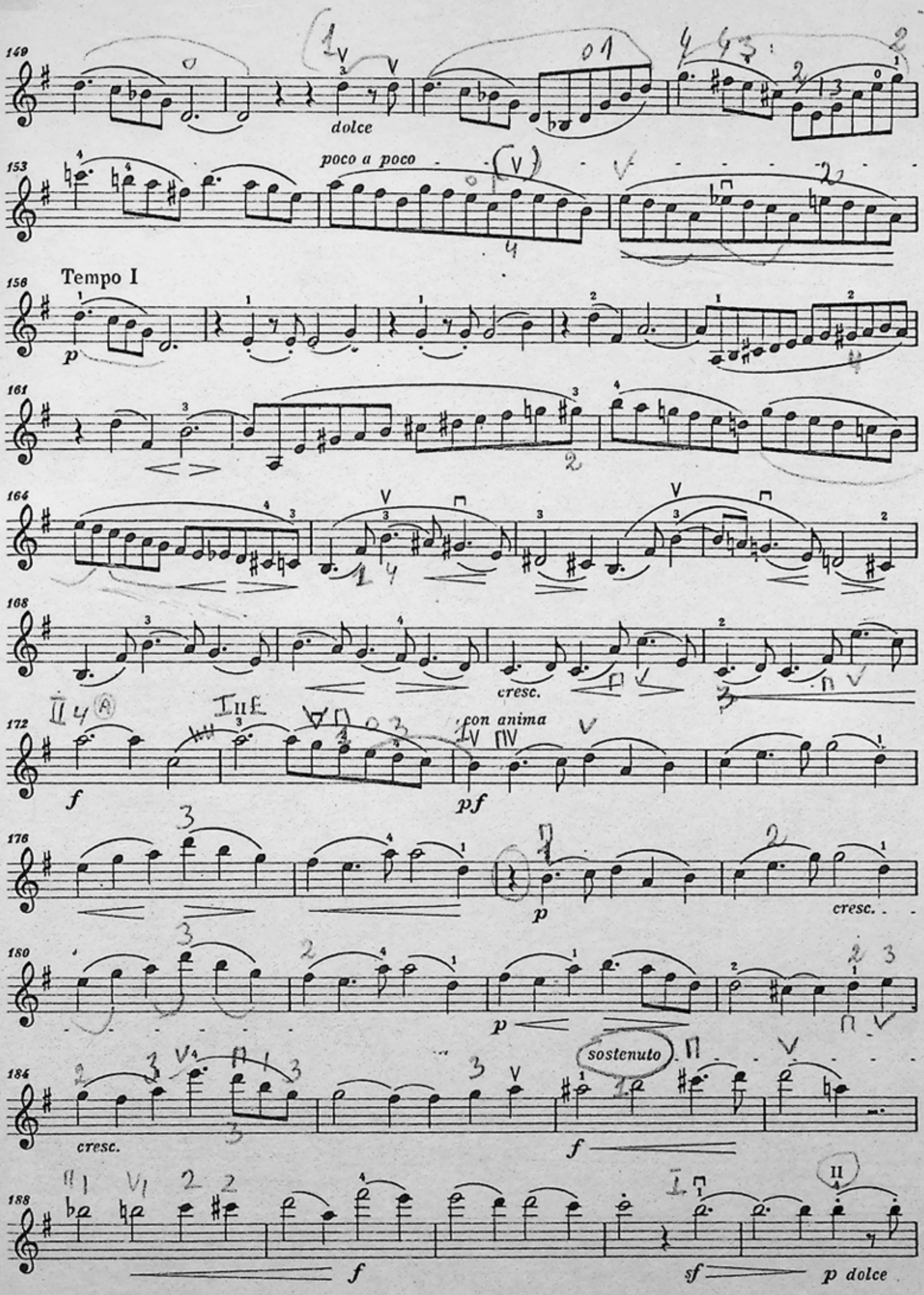
Johannes Brahms

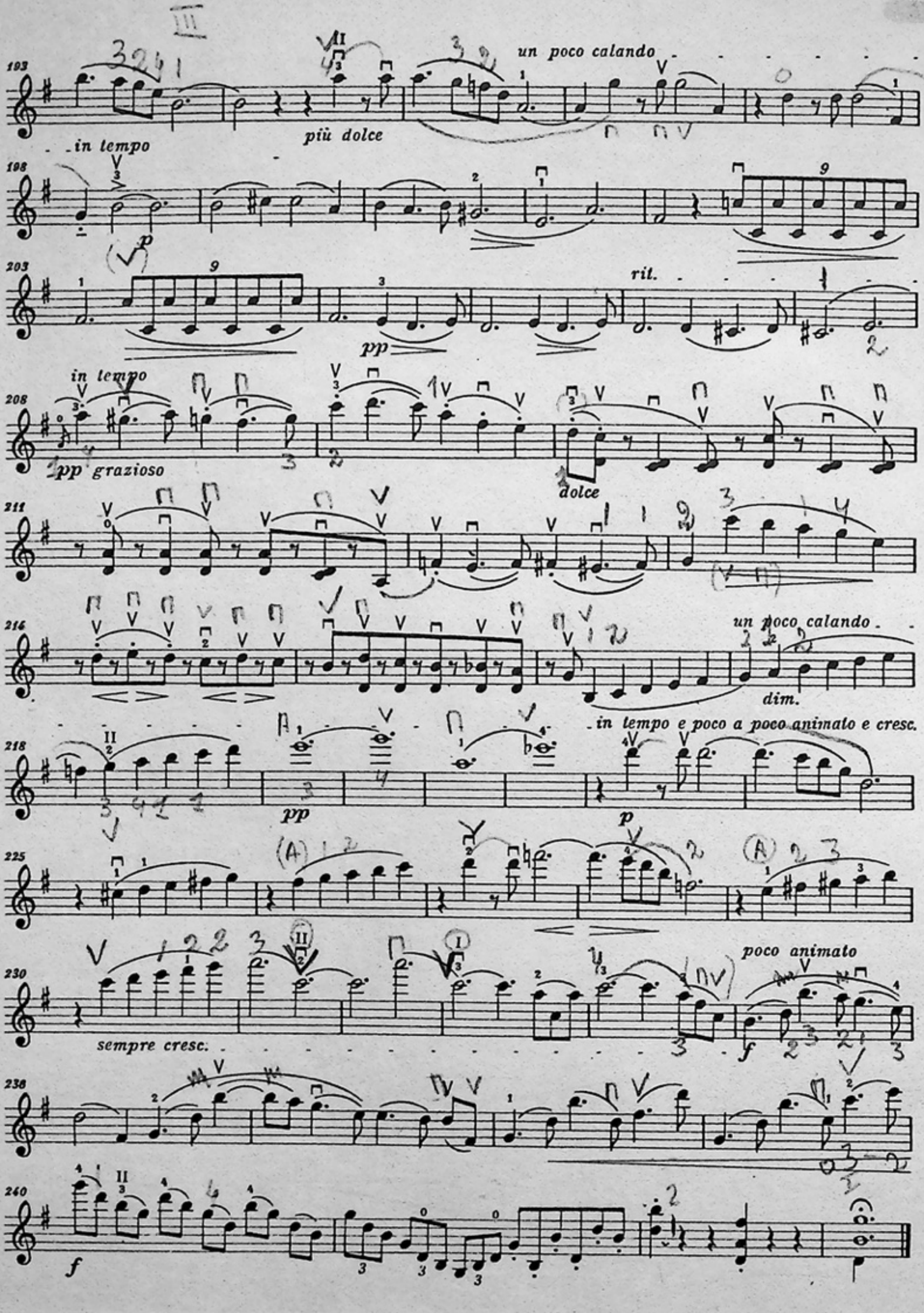
Vivace ma non troppo

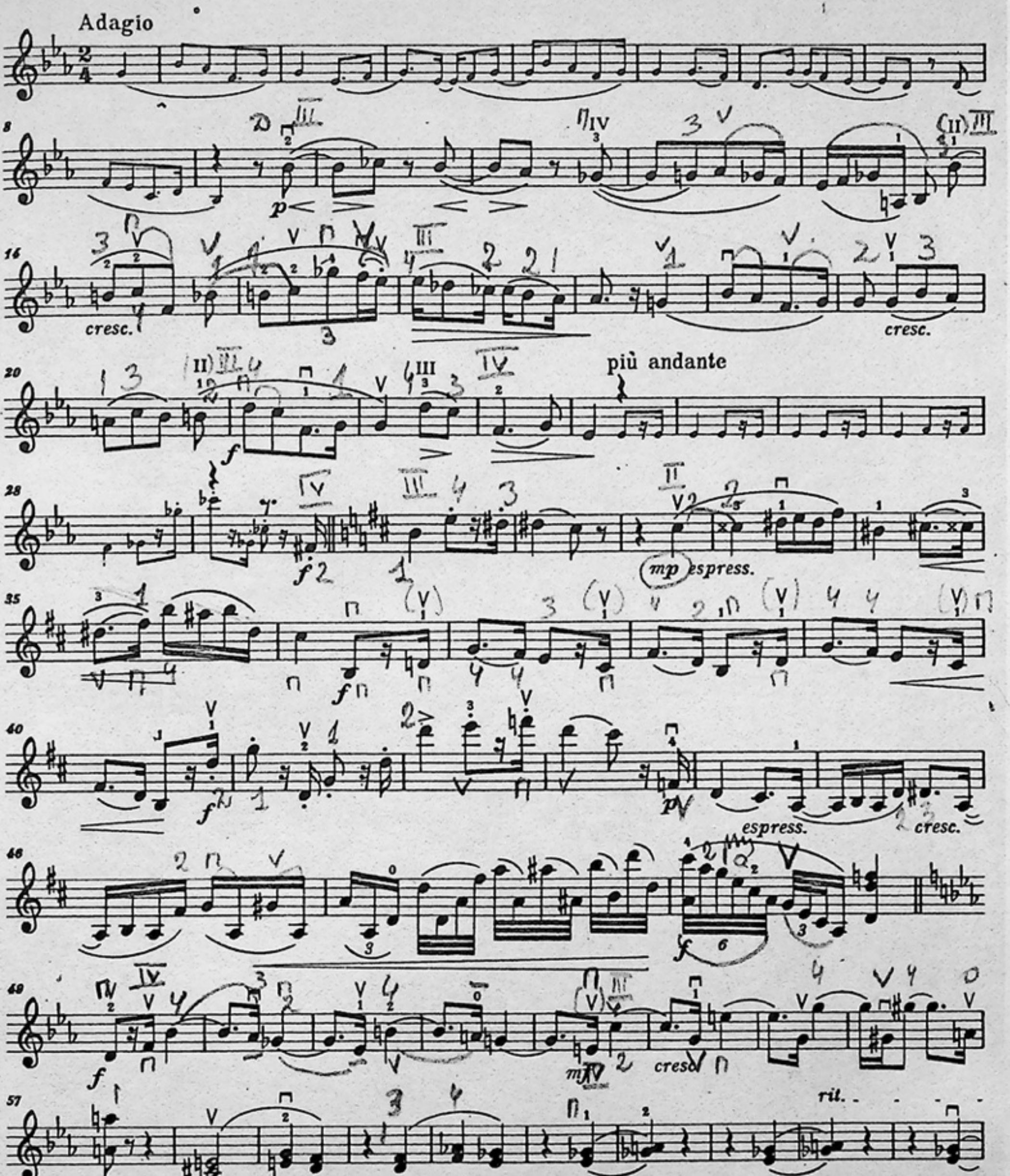


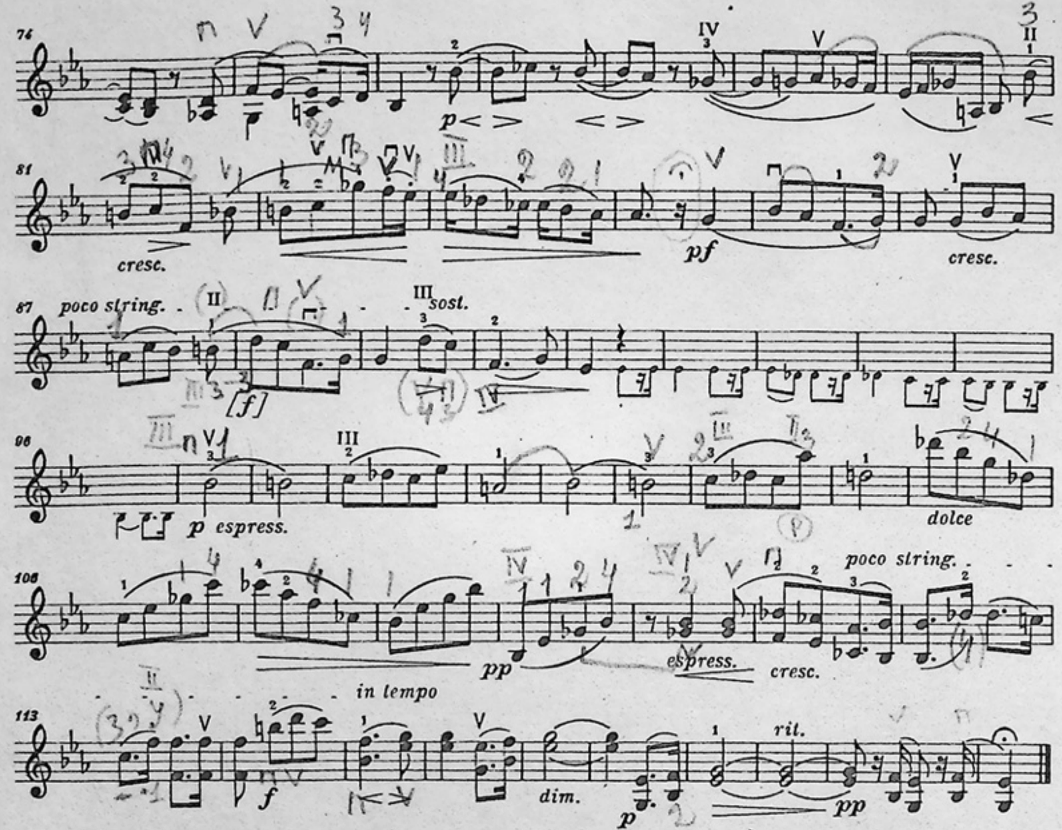

50
cresc.
f
sf
p dolce
56
un poco calando
in tempo
dim.
p
61
pp
ril.
in tempo
66
pp
pp grazioso e teneramente
71
75
un poco calando
in tempo
79
dim.
pizz.
p dolce
85
arco
sempre dolce
91
96
98
p


poco a poco . . . . più sostenuto
103
cresc.
f
sf
108
111
sf
115
118
più f
122
(II)
126
1
f
IV
130
II
134
p
II
139
144
p

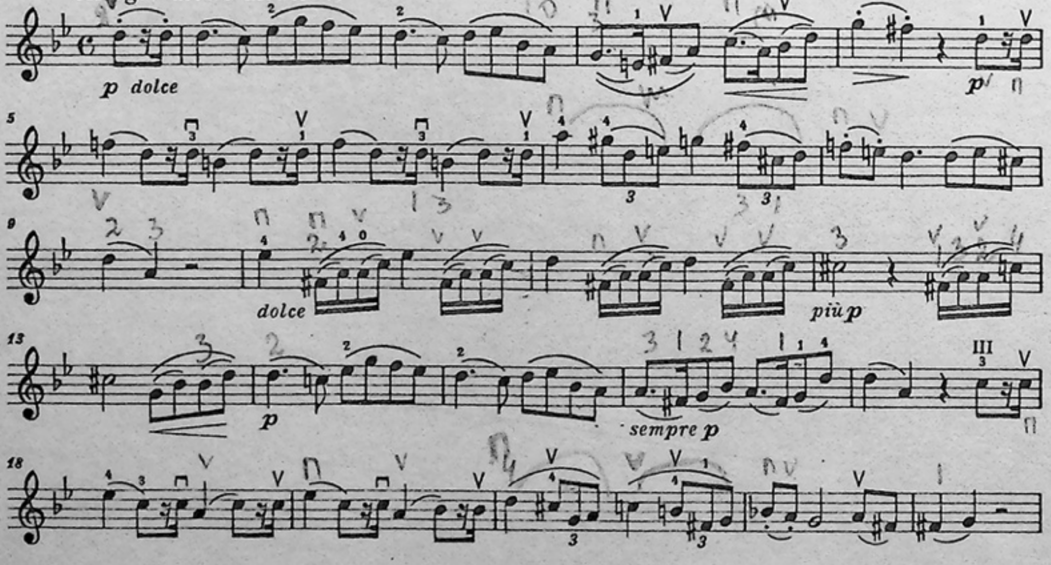

149
dolce
153
poco a poco
156
Tempo I
p
161
164
168
cresc.
172
f
con anima
pf
176
p
cresc.
180
p
184
cresc.
sostenuto
f
188
f
sf
p dolce

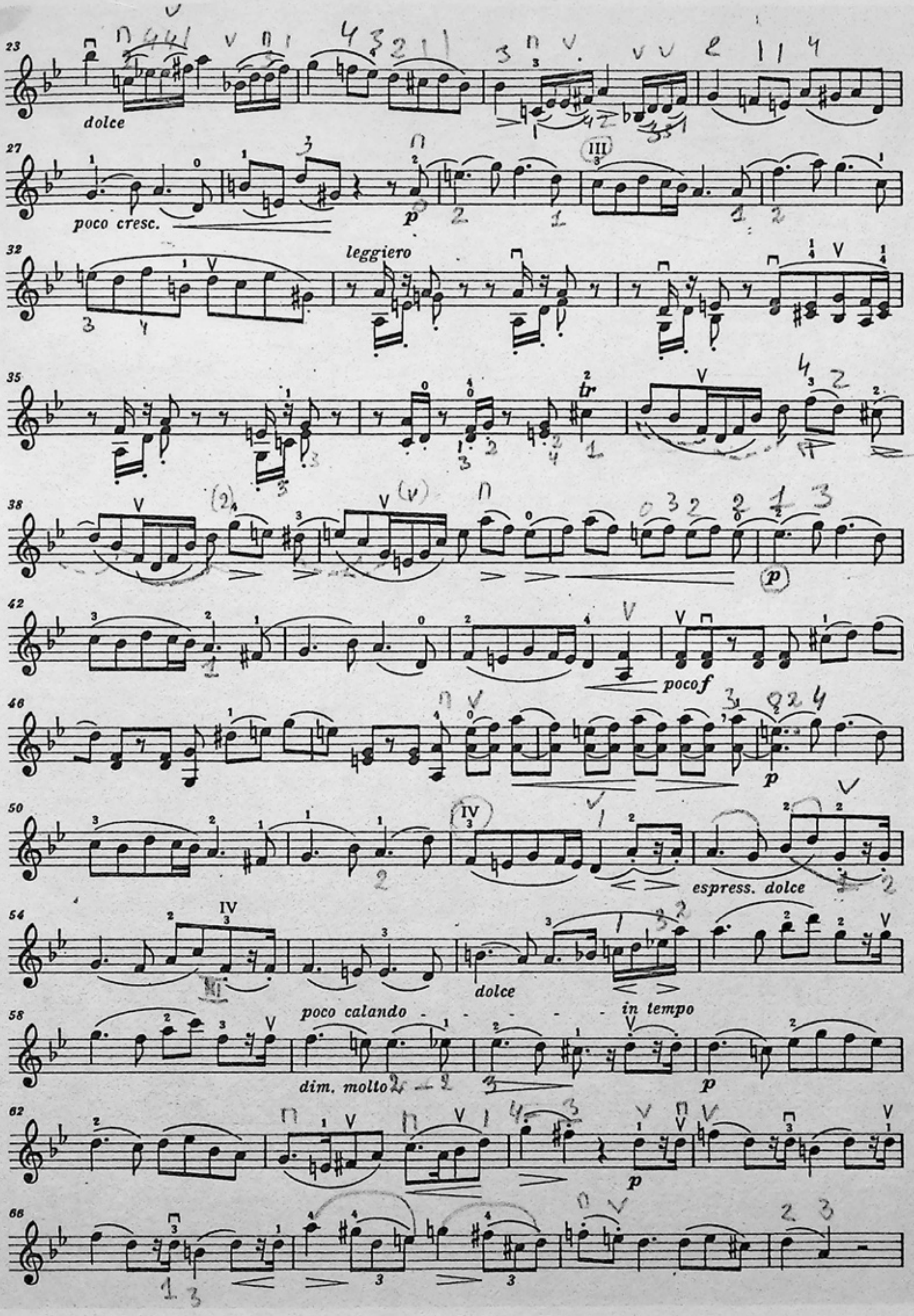

III
193
un poco calando
più dolce
in tempo
198
p
203
rit.
pp
in tempo
208
pp grazioso
dolce
211
216
un poco calando
dim.
218
pp
in tempo e poco a poco animato e cresc.
p
225
(A)
230
sempre cresc.
poco animato
f
236
240
f


Adagio
p
cresc.
cresc.
f
più andante
f
mp espress.
f
f
espress.
cresc.
f
f
mf
cresc.
rit.
f
p
dim.
Adagio come prima
legato
f espress.



Allegro molto moderato

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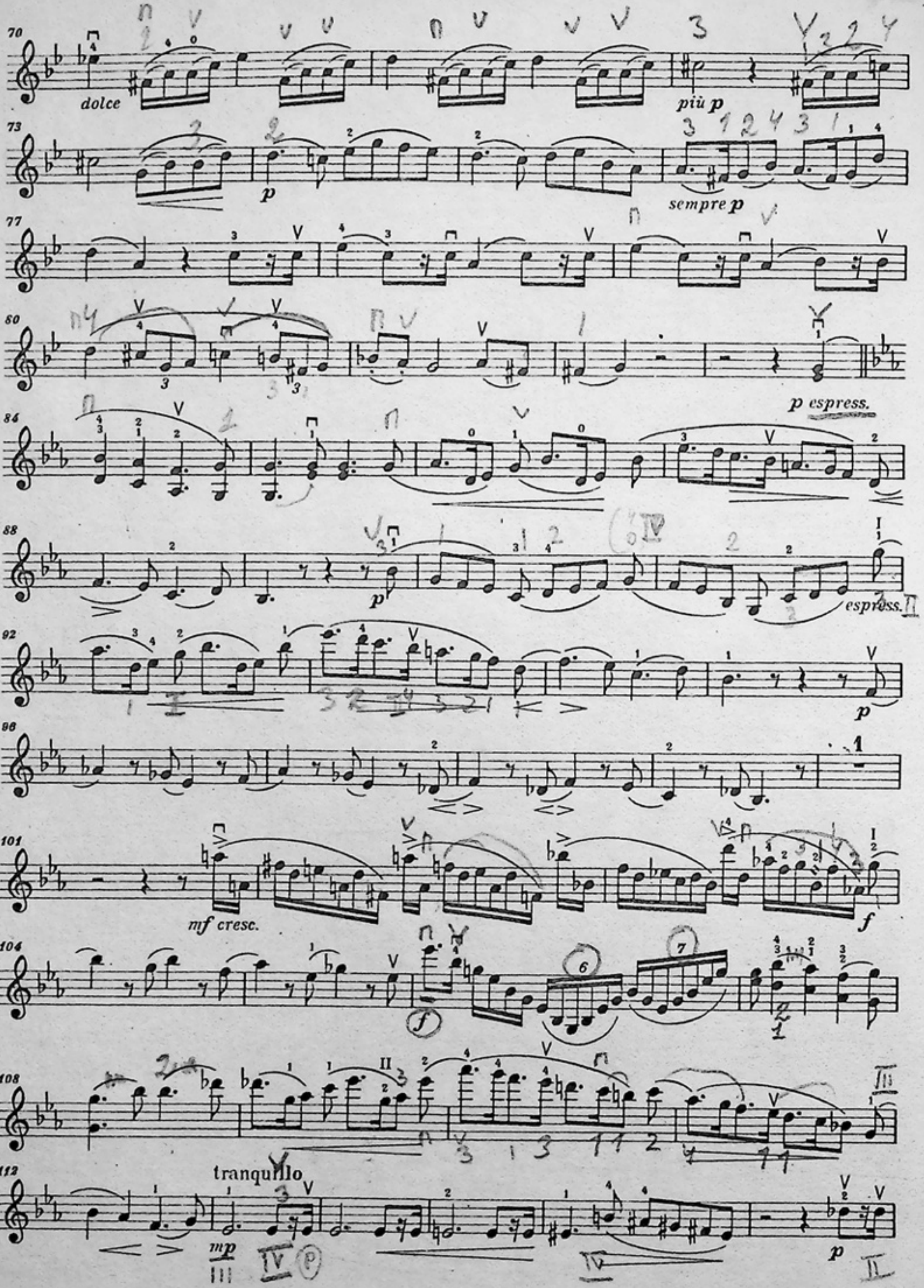
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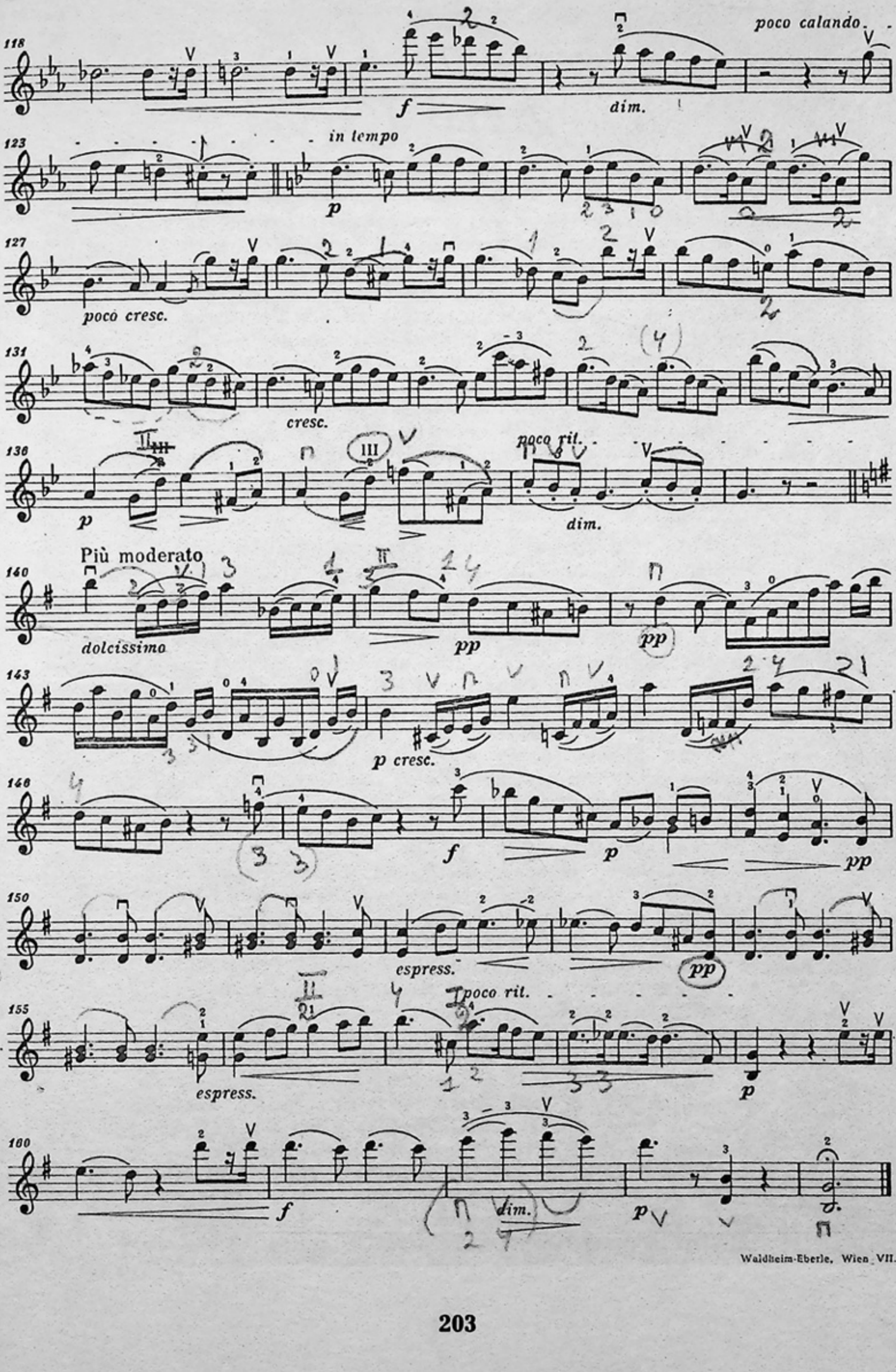


Waldheim-Eberle, Wien VII.

Ruggiero Ricci

Ruggiero Ricci was born in San Francisco, California, July 24, 1918. He was one of a family with seven children, each of whom was given a musical instrument to play by the parents. Ricci started the violin in early childhood, impelled by his ambitious father who, determined that the lad become a great violinist, gave him his first lessons. He became a pupil of Louis Persinger, and in his first years was guided by Persinger's assistant, Elizabeth Lackey. By the age of ten he had already acquired exceptional technical skill. In 1929 he made his debut with the San Francisco Symphony as soloist in the Mendelssohn Violin Concerto, Op. 64, and later that year made a New York debut playing the same concerto with the Manhattan Symphony Orchestra. He was immediately acclaimed a child prodigy of the first rank.

Following a legal wrangle over his guardianship, during a period in which his father temporarily changed the lad's name to Woodrow Wilson Rich, he encountered a brief period of violinistic decline. But he soon made a 'comeback,' receiving rave reviews in both Europe and America. In addition to Persinger, Ricci studied with Michel Piastro and George Kulenkampff. His concertizing career was interrupted by army service in 1942 in World War II, during which he served with the Special Services Division, performing at various army camps throughout the U.S.A. He re-established his career after the war with a Carnegie Hall recital of unaccompanied works which was a violinistic triumph.

A bravura virtuoso in the Paganini tradition, Ricci has long since been accounted among the world's elite violinists. His vast and continually expanding repertoire is perhaps unsurpassed by any violinist. He has recorded more than 200 different opuses, great and small, and ranks high on the all-time list of recording violinists in number of recorded compositions. Ricci was also the first violinist to record the entire 24 Paganini Caprices in their original solo form.

At this writing he still averages a public concert for every third day of his life. He has been a Professor of violin for three years at the University of Indiana and is currently on the faculty of the Juilliard School of Music.

Ricci lives in an apartment in New York, close to the Lincoln Center. His brother, George, is a solo and recording cellist of note, and his sister, Emma, is a violinist in the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra.

Ruggiero Ricci was considered such an amazing child prodigy, that cartoons were issued depicting him as being able to play the most difficult Paganini works while standing on a horse!

It has been nearly three decades since the original interview with Ruggiero Ricci appeared in Volume 1 of "The Way They Play" series. During that period the violinistic career of Ricci has continued to soar. The name, Ricci, has become a household word in every menage in which violin art is loved and cherished, not only for his near-legendary association with the works of Paganini, but for aggressive command of the repertoire which intrepidly braves and overcomes any violinistic challenge, no matter how formidable.

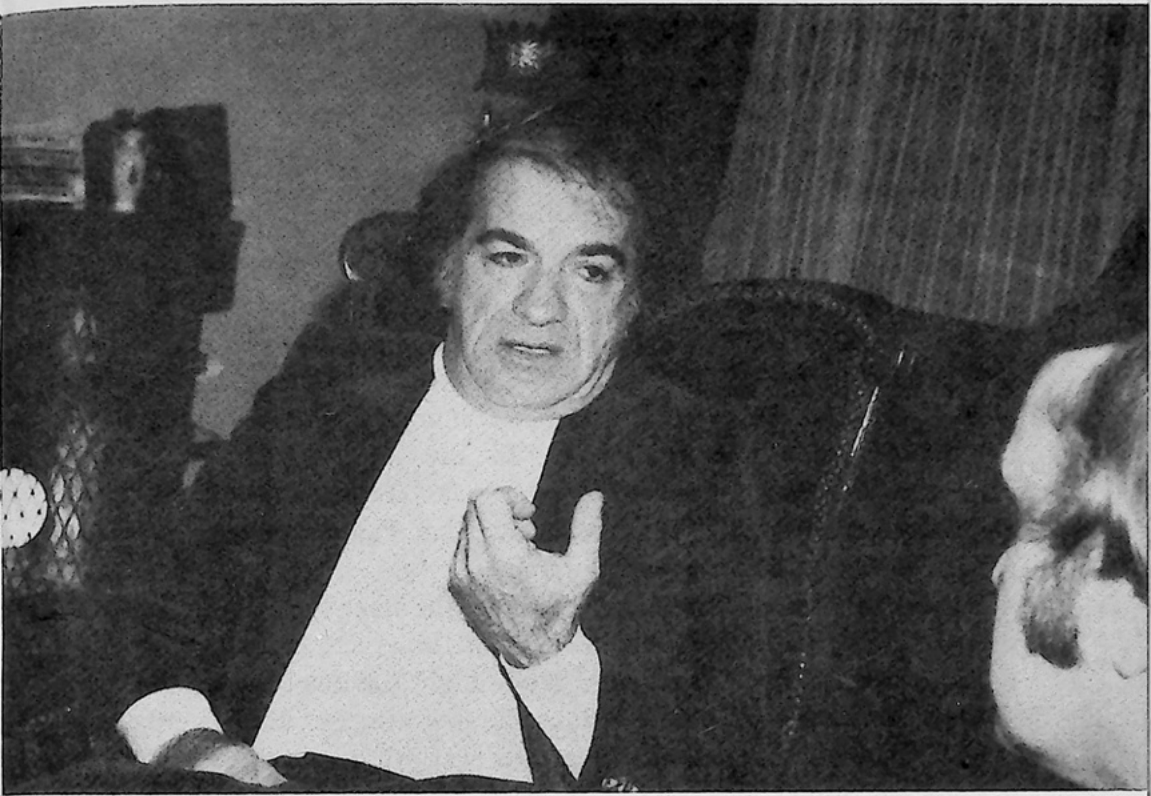
Ricci had just flown in from Europe, and though he had scant rest and was scheduled to play a major New Jersey concert that same evening, generously met with us for several hours with not even an off-hand peep at his wrist-watch.

Approaching his sixth decade, the violinist still has more pep and vigour than many a teenager. A short, sturdy Napoleonic figure, with genial brown eyes that are quick to smile, he is intensely voluble of speech and has a high-spirited, devil-may-care manner which,in climactic outburst, can be as explosive as if he were assaulting a monstrously difficult variation of Paganini's "Nel cor piu non mi sento." He is an inveterate student of the violin and its lore, and delights in 'fiddle talk.' One becomes immediately impressed with his extraordinary subtle knowledge of the mechanics of violin playing.

We asked, "How do you feel you have grown, violinistically, since your previous interview for this series?"

Ricci thought for a moment. "Basically," he said, "in the technical sense, I have stayed on the same road, but stylistically and tonally I have changed. When I listen to one of my early recordings, it is obvious that my style now is more robust—my sound, thicker and more resonant. My old recordings are very meticulous and clean. I still want to play that way, but now I am much more sound conscious—much more conscious of my vibrato.

"I now stress diversity of vibrato. At times I make it narrower, and occasionally I don't vibrate at all. In this respect, I am far more demanding than in my younger years. I have learned that knowing what proportion of vibrato to feed into the violin is one of the most difficult aspects of violin playing. Now, more than ever, I



Ricci, who will be 60 on his next birthday, July 24th, 1978, was asked about his growth, violinistically. His reply: "Basically, in the technical sense, I have stayed on the same road, but stylistically and tonally, I have changed."

think about the mood of the work I am trying to convey, and the position on the violin in which I am playing—in terms of vibrato."

"'Would you comment further on your last statement?"

"Yes. If one is playing, for instance, at the bottom of the G-string, the vibrato can be made wider and quite a bit slower. But if one is playing in the top stretches of the E-string, almost everyone's vibrato tends to be too wide. If you stop to analyze it, the vibrating finger on these high notes are perilously close to the next higher semi-tone—sometimes practically into it. The higher up the fingerboard one goes, the narrower the distance between notes."

"What about vibrato in relation to the length of the notes?"

"Well, of course—the shorter the note, the less possibility for a satisfactory vibrato. This is all a very tricky business. On the one hand, too much vibrato on passing notes is worse than none at all. Yet, if one can put just a touch of vibrato on eighth and even sixteenth notes, the totality of the violinist's sound can be enhanced, provided it is done exactly right. If the pitch is forced off kilter even by a hair, the violinist is in trouble."

"Do you think Paganini played with vibrato?"

"Yes, I do." Ricci rummaged through a pile of music on a nearby table and pulled out a piece which proved to be a sonata for violin and guitar by Paganini. He opened it and pointed a finger at a printed word—"Tremolando." "In my opinion," he said somewhat excitedly, "this refers not to a bowed tremolo, but definitely to vibrato. I cannot conceive that Paganini made his spectacular triumphs without vibrato!"

Ricci's theory was provocative and set the stage for a potential debate of pros and cons, which was not, however, immediately relevant to our visit. Regrettable. We brought the discussion back to his own increasing tonal consciousness, pointing out that his fast detaché playing now projected a greater warmth of sound than in his younger years.

"That's because I try to think of these passages as 'Cantilena.' I feel I play with a lot more freedom, and my improved sound is an important part of this development. But let me tell you something. Freedom without discipline isn't worth a fig, unless a violinist wants to play like a gypsy. It is not easy to combine a sense of freedom with disciplined musicianship. This is one of the things for which I constantly strive."

"Could we talk for a bit on problems of intonation," we asked. "For example—what about the difficulties in playing rapid half-tone passages?"

"Do you know what the chief problem is in this? Simple. It's a matter of getting the fingers out of each other's way, especially in high positions. Very often I will use a third finger extension to another third for both facility and intonation security."

"What about so-called 'absolute' intonation?"

"I believe that 'absolute' intonation is a rather abstract concept. In music, every note is in relation to another, and not necessarily beholden to some arbitrarily selected 'perfect' pitch. For instance, the difference between major and minor in the third and the seventh should be, if anything, on the sharp side."

"Even sharper than on the piano?"

"Right. I don't consider piano pitch to be an infallible guide for judging intonation."

"How, then, does this apply to tuning the violin?"

"Ah. Now we get on a subject that is never sufficiently explored. First of all, the A-string should be a tiny bit sharper than the A on the piano. The D-string should be a little sharp to the A-string, and the G-string, sharp to the D-string. The A-string itself should be a little sharp to the E-string."

"Please explain your last remark."

"Well—you see, the E-strings we play in this era are steel, and more likely to resist pitch alteration than the A-strings which are

Ruggiero Ricci discusses Paganini with Tom Lindsey. Ricci has long been considered one of the world's foremost authorities on interpreting Paganini compositions.

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generally aluminum wound on comparatively soft gut. As for the other strings—if, for example, you have the G-string perfectly tuned to the A-string, and you start off on the open G-string, like in the Bruch Concerto No. 1, your open G-string is apt to be flat. In the heat of playing, all of the strings except possibly the steel E-string are in great danger of going flat unless they are tuned 'on the sharp side' to begin with."

"How do you tune when you play as a soloist with orchestra?"

"When I am backstage and the orchestra is already performing out front, I take the orchestra's general pitch which is bound to be a bit sharper than the pitch I would receive from the oboe if I were to start tuning onstage."

"How do you make allowances for temperature changes in tuning your violin?"

"I believe that absolute intonation is a rather abstract concept. In music, every note is in relation to another, and not necessarily beholden to some arbitrarily selected perfect pitch."

"A good question. The most difficult situation in that regard is when I have to play in an open-air place like the Hollywood Bowl. Then I definitely tune backstage—not in my dressing room but somewhere behind the scenery where the temperature is closest to that out front. I listen carefully to the pitch of the orchestra and retune three or four times. This process can take from five to ten minutes."

"Aren't you going to tune in the presence of the audience at all?"

"No, unless for some reason I haven't had an opportunity to hear the orchestra, or the temperature onstage is a great deal different. If, by some chance they have been playing a 12-tone com-

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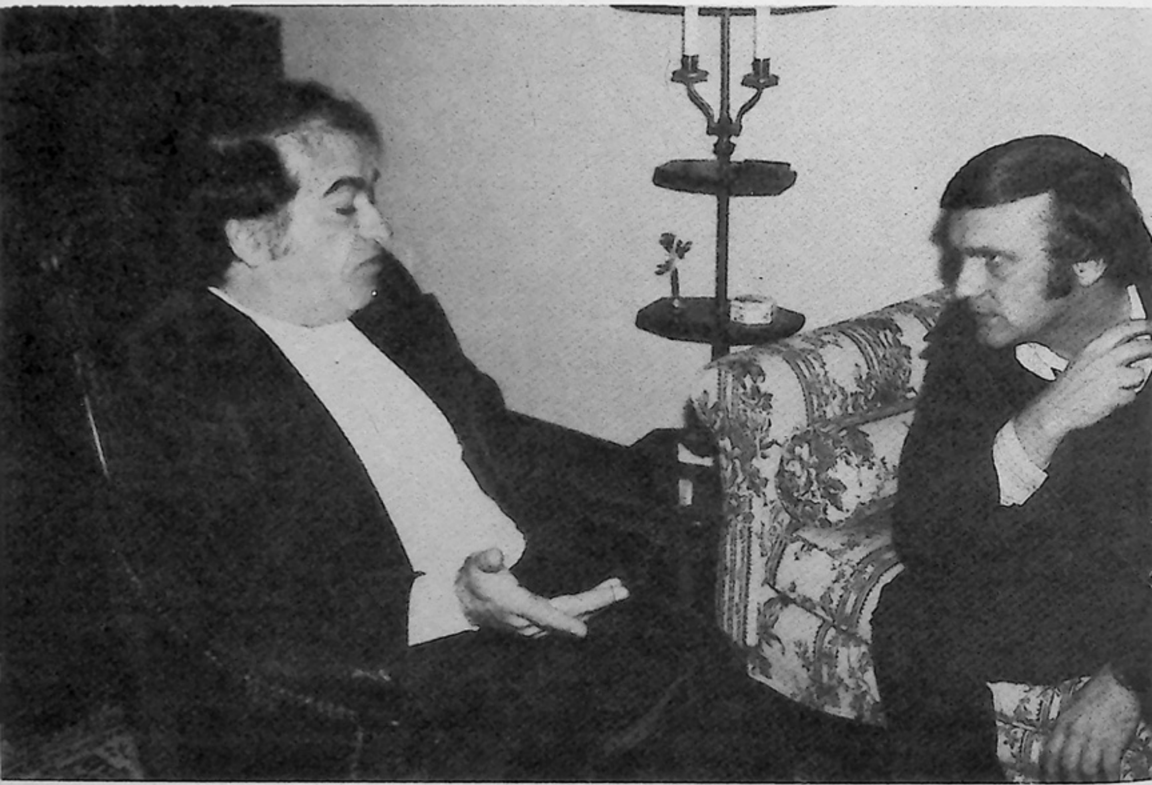


Ruggiero Ricci after he played the Sixth Paganini "Violin Concerto" in its American debut. He edited the music and wrote a cadenza for this Concerto. Dr. Applebaum and his friends celebrated with Maestro Ricci after the extremely successful performance.

position and I couldn't hear a triad, then I will tune in front of the audience."

"But in any event, you always tune your A-string a little sharp?"

"There can be an exception to the rule, for instance, if I am playing in an area like Arizona, where the weather is very dry. In that case, the violin tends to go up in pitch. But generally speaking, the violinist's pitch goes down while the orchestra, as a whole, goes up, and he winds up with his violin out of tune for the whole movement."

"Embarrassing, isn't it?"

"You said it! And another thing I notice when most violinists tune. They will tune the D-string to the A-string by screwing the peg down to around the C-sharp and then up to the exact D. Then, if they pull it a bit with the finger, which is somewhat equivalent to the pressure the string receives in playing, the D is flat. I, too, pull the string with my finger, but only after I have tuned it a mite sharp with the peg. In that way, I have made allowance in advance for the string stretching. Can I tell you something else that I do in tuning?"

"By all means!"

"I never tune by screwing the peg *up* to the note. I tune *above* the note and then screw the peg *down* in pitch. Take a first-class piano tuner. He tunes sharp and hits the string several times—hard. Then the string pitch is set firmly at the correct pitch."

"Do you tune onstage when you play with piano?"

"I avoid this as much as possible—like Paganini. It is my strong belief that he never tuned in front of the audience, unless for some reason he was forced to."

"Do you think this had something to do with Paganini's practice of scordatura tuning?"

"Absolutely. For example, when he played his Concerto No. 1 in D-major, he secretly tuned his violin up half a tone so that he actually played the work in the key of E-flat. This added a certain measure of brilliance to the violin sound. Meanwhile, the orchestra parts had been written in E-flat, and the musicians didn't know about his trickery in tuning. They thought that he actually played in D."

"You certainly give great emphasis to proper tuning of the violin."

"Always. When I am a judge in a competition, I start judging the fiddle player by the way he tunes up. I feel that if he's not going to be fussy about tuning, he's not going to be fussy about intonation, either. I remember an old story I was told about Hubay. One of his pupils walked onstage to play a concert without tuning carefully. Hubay threw him out of his class."

"Can we talk a little about tuning from the standpoint of the bow?"

"Yes. And we can start right off with the Bach 'Chaconne.' In the past I had pitch problems with this work dozens of times, and every time I think about it I want to kick myself for being stupid. At that time I had the habit of tuning pianissimo like so many violinists do. Then, when I would start to hit the chords, my A-string would go flat, and I had to play through the whole piece 'walking on eggs,' pitch-wise. Now I know better. I tune loud and hit my strings hard in advance so that when I start to play, the strings are already well stretched. It's always a lot safer to tune 'forte,' though I suppose some of my concertizing colleagues might disagree with me. Sometimes after I tune, I will play the downward chromatic runs in sixths from the Tchaikovsky Concerto cadenza, to help stretch the strings."

We had just about exhausted the subject of tuning. Then we sought to persuade the feisty scion of the Paganini tradition to analyze a major violin work for us—any work.

"Nothing doing," he retorted. "Get yourself a musicologist. He can do a better job than I can. I'd rather talk about the general faults of string players."

"And what are they?"

"First—sloppy execution; not taking sufficient care. Too much willingness to 'settle for less.' "

"What else?"

"Intonation, intonation and intonation!"

"And how do you propose to remedy faulty intonation?"

"Students, and professionals, too, for that matter, must learn to use the ears God gave them. And use of a tape machine can also help immensely. Oh yes—something else—get a violin teacher who is critical.

"Too many of these teachers think they're above such things as teaching intonation. They give these kids major works and they continue to play out of tune for the next forty years."

"Please continue."

"O.K.—another very weak point is sostenuto bowing. Too many players suffer from a lack of smooth bowing continuity that emanates from the common fault of first pushing the right wrist up and then pulling it down, so there is always a sound of bowing change at either end of the stick. Other habitual bowing flaws result from not using enough bow or using too much pressure.

Most of the young players nowadays are unhappy unless they can get a Guarnerius. They can't play Strads because you can't beat a Strad to death. If they played correctly, they should be able to play a Strad."

"Have you finished mentioning the main violinistic flaws?"

"Not yet. There's one more that really 'bugs' me, and 99% of my colleagues are guilty. I'm talking about the uneven use of vibrato on passing tones. They play one note vibrato followed by several dead notes—one Western, several Chinese. This is murder for fluent continuity of expressive phrasing. Or else they start a note and don't apply vibrato till well into the note, resulting in a note that has two different qualities of colour for no musical purpose whatsoever."

"Mr. Ricci, you will shortly give the American premiere of the Paganini Concerto No. 6. Could you tell us something about it?"

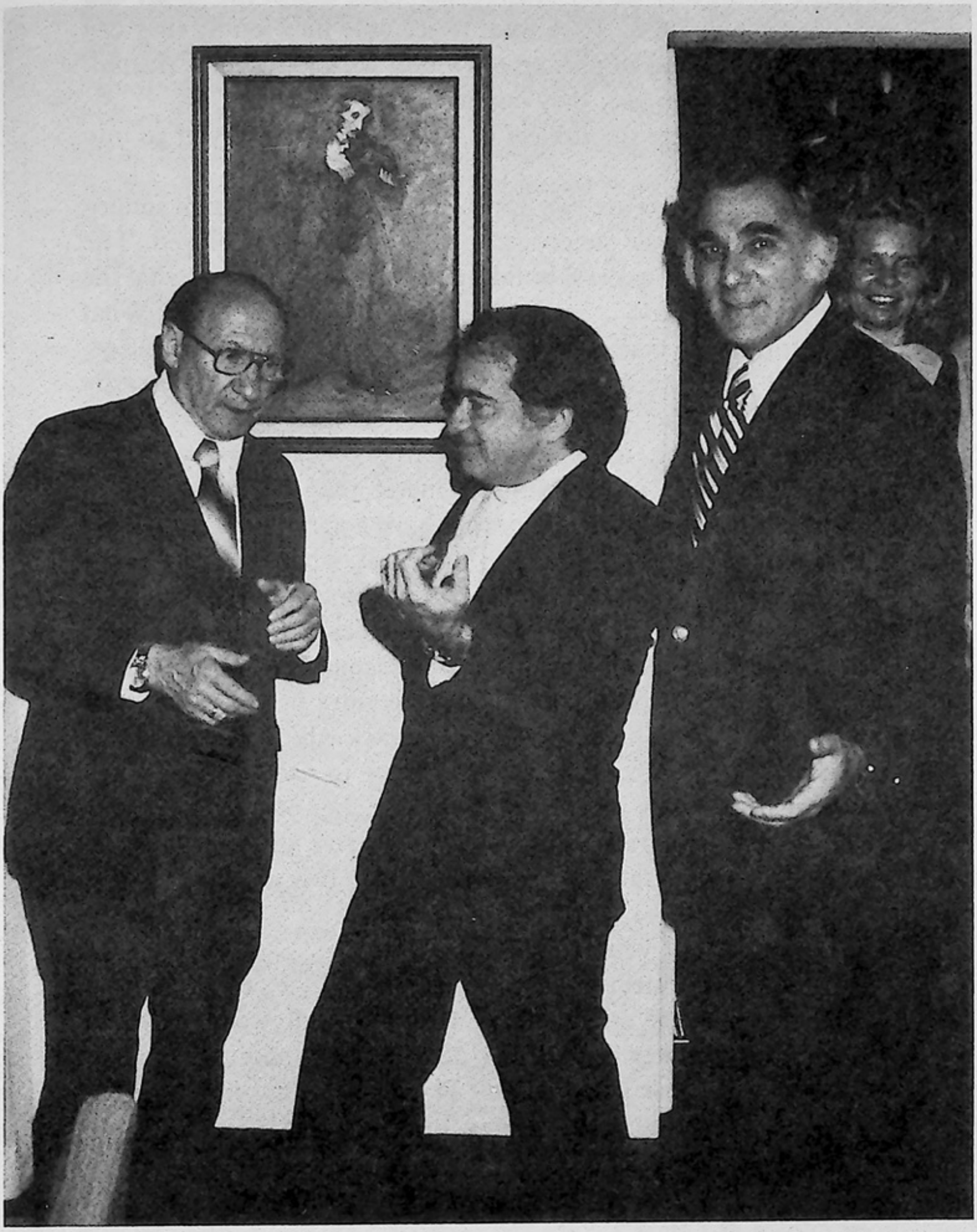
"All right. But since my function is not that of a musicologist, aside from performing the work itself, all I can do is give you a few facts. This concerto, though called No. 6, actually preceded the Concerto No. 1 in D-major in time of composition. I consider it as Paganini's concerto in the traditional manner of those violinist-composers who came before him. In the Concerto No. 1, which is really his second concerto, he advanced to a more spectacular level of violin technique. I would recommend that students study No. 6 before they try to tackle No. 1."

Ricci plays on the Guarnerius del Gesu which formerly belonged to Bronislaw Huberman—one of the all-time great violins. And indeed, there is a slight resemblance in physique and features between the two artists, though their musical styles are quite dissimilar. We asked him about his violins.

"My del Gesu," he said, "is from that master's middle period, 1734, and rather 'Strad-ish' in quality, not like Heifetz's, which is a late del Gesu and more aggressive. You know Heifetz, with his unique attack and intensity of sound, is particularly exceptional on the E-string. My other violin is a copy of a late del Gesu. It's a splendid-sounding and beautiful instrument which I play in many of my concerts. It was made by Luiz Bellini in New York."

"Do you consider that old instruments, in general, are difficult to play?"

"Not if you know how. However, a lot of these young people



Beneath the famous portrait of Paganini, Ruggiero Ricci discusses the American première of the sixth Paganini Concerto with Dr. Applebaum. To the right are Dr. and Mrs. Axelrod.

go into a violin shop to try old violins. They attack the fiddle and play only double-forte. They want to see only how loudly they can trumpet. If they had to play an old violin with gut strings the old-time players had to use, they couldn't play a note."

"Since you raise the subject of tonal sonority, will you go into it a bit?"

"All right. There are two approaches to the question of sonority. One concerns how sonorous a single note can be played. The other deals with the general build-up of sonority, which is what the old Italian school, and later, the Belgian school, emphasized. What I am getting at is true sonority versus screaming volume. Often, that which gives the impression of big sound does not necessarily register high on the volume meter. For instance, one may hear a fine singer with rich, round resonance in his vocal delivery, but he will register lower on the volume meter than someone who is screaming his head off. Some people have a speaking voice which sounds as if they had an organ in their chest, whereas my speaking voice is somewhat shrill and has little resonance. This all boils down to the fact that in violin playing, the ideal sound is one that is predicated on producing and projecting resonance, not one that is produced through rough, heavy bow pressure or constant direct bow attack. The brilliant Heifetz bow attack which is exceedingly penetrative, is fine, but one does not have to use it all the time. This sort of attack is great on the E-string, but on the G-string it would tend to be harsh. Violinists should strive also to master the kind of cushioned attack David Oistrakh had. It is wise to vary bow attack."

"Tell us about your bows."

"I have two Pajeot bows. One is very stiff. I call it my 'outdoor' bow and use it in places like the Hollywood Bowl or wherever the weather is humid. Under normal conditions I never use this bow because I really don't like it much, but my other Pajeot sags badly in humid conditions. I really prefer both my Peccattes to any of the others."

"Does the type of composition you are playing ever influence your choice of bows?"

"Yes. If for instance, I am playing a brittle type of work like Prokofiev, I prefer a bow that's quite taut. But if I'm playing Bach where I need more sonority, I like a softer bow with lots of 'cushion' that will bend easily over three strings."

"When you play the Bach "Chaconne" it seems as if you often strike three strings simultaneously. Is this because you use a bridge that is flatter than normal?"

"The matter of bridge height is interesting. You see—violin makers generally set up the bridge height according to a standard metal pattern they use. This is all right for the average player who can get along quite well with a bridge that has a comparatively big arch. But a virtuoso player needs all the advantages he can get. There are two things he can do."

"What are they?"

"First, he can make the bridge as flat as possible with the arch kept to a bare minimum—just enough to permit facile string crossing. The other is to keep the strings as close to the fingerboard as possible—just enough clearance to keep the strings from buzzing."

"But doesn't lowering the bridge height reduce the brilliance of the instrument?"

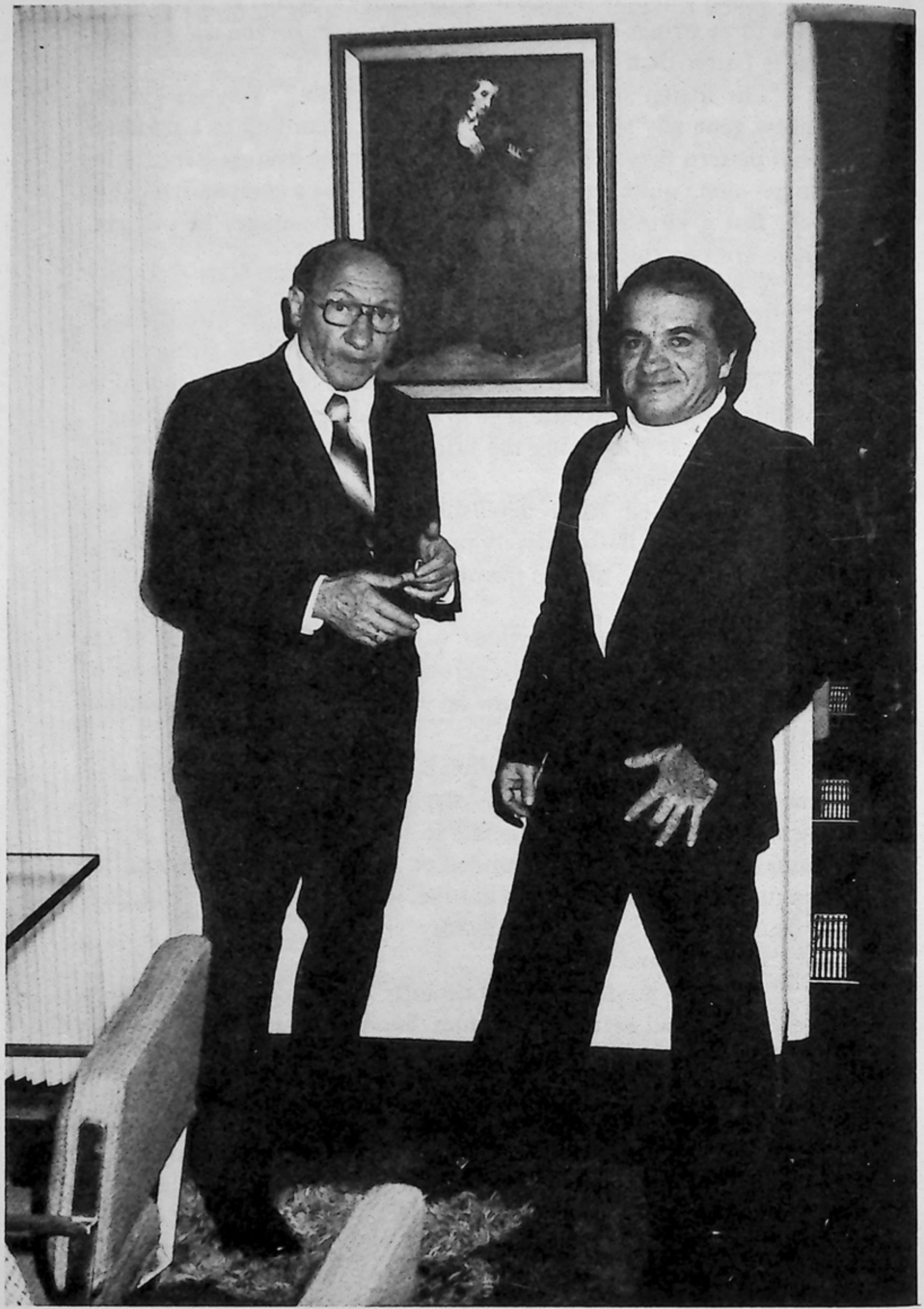
"Ah," smiled Ricci devilishly, "we should not lower the bridge height at all—we merely raise the fingerboard, but still keep the strings as close to it as possible. This makes for better intonation, too."

We realized that the virtuoso had just parted with some of his personal violinistic secrets. Generous! We next sought out some of his ideas about teaching. "How do you go about teaching students clean intonation," we asked.

"The key to perfect intonation is ear training. I hear many a 20 year-old student who has been playing out of tune ever since he started because no one bothered to train his ear. When I was a youngster, teachers often pounded on the piano to help correct intonation, and if the piano was in tune, so much the better. But that, of course, is not a really satisfactory practice."

"What do you suggest?"

"First, the student must constantly check his intonation with open strings and natural harmonics. Next, he must concentrate on practicing the notes sostenuto, and loudly. When I was young I used to practice loud thirds up and down the fingerboard with total concentration on intonation. This also serves to develop more general security of the left hand. And I believe in practicing lots of fifths with the finger set more on the upper string than the lower because of the angle. The fingerboard must be mastered horizontally as well as vertically."



"Do you advise your students to grip the violin mainly with the neck and shoulder, or the left hand?"

"The fiddle should not be held solely with the neck. It must also be held with the hand. If you tried to take the fiddle away from me, you could knock it away from my chin, but not out of my hand. And I don't believe in the 'death grip' with the shoulder. Not only does this interfere with general relaxation, but no matter how strong the shoulder grip, the violin can be knocked away. The hand grip itself should be based on a sort of fist grip."

"How do you recommend the fingers be placed on the strings?"

"The student should avoid stressing the fingertip extremities and play on the pads of the fingers where there is more flesh."

"How do you regulate the various sonorities of bowed sound?"

"The essential thing is to find the core of the sound, irrespective of which dynamic level is being played. Instrumentally, the two main points of contact in making the proper adjustments are the left hand fingertips and the first finger on the bow."

"Do you have any 'rule of thumb' that you use in changing strings to produce different timbres of tone?"

"Not really. This is a very individual thing for every violinist. All I can say to this is that personally I never try to get a big sound high up on the A-string because there is no particular quality there. I prefer the first F above the staff on the A-string in lyric passages because the F on the bottom of the E-string tends to be hard in sound. And high up on the G-string where matters are touch-and-go, I use quite a bit of finger pressure. Up there, it is like driving on a wet highway. It's no place to get reckless."

"Mr. Ricci—you are known as a very audacious player, yet like every other celebrated violinist, you have practiced countless hours at a very slow tempo and with the greatest of care. When you play with aggressiveness and 'kamikaze' daring, do you feel you must make concessions to the element of caution?"

Paganini had a very unorthodox pose. Both Dr. Applebaum and Ruggiero Ricci tried to imitate that pose by showing that the weight of the body is put onto the left foot, so the right foot, and consequently the right arm, are more free.

"Well, all fiddle players have to be careful—or at least, they should be. Even Paganini must have exercised care to play his double-harmonics cleanly. But there are tricks in every trade. For example, when I play at the top of the G-string, I am careful not to use too much fingering so that the fingers won't stumble over each other. I avoid using 1-2, 1-2. Instead, I use 1-1, 2-2, 3-3, etc. That is how I exercise care in a tremendously difficult area and use the instrument in a realistic manner."

"Do you have any comparable suggestion with bow usage?"

"Yes. Most players don't think of this, but if your left hand is going from the bottom to the top of the G-string, it is easier to play up-bow on the bottom note and down-bow on the top note. My thesis is this—I believe there is a definite connection between the direction in which your left hand is going, and that of your right hand. I don't say that this is a rule that can never be broken, but in general, it is a safer procedure."

"How do you advise your students on fingerings?"

"For one thing, I tell them not to practice individual scales with only one fingering. Actually, it doesn't matter which finger is used, so long as the sound and intonation are good, but changing fingerings in scales helps to develop greater digital flexibility. Also, while some players have a strong fourth finger and others do not, the fourth finger is generally a poor finger for beauty of sound.

"I don't believe in set fingerings, and I strongly disagree with those teachers who lend the student their personal sheet music and tell them to copy the fingerings. This is ridiculous. Everyone has different sized and shaped hands and fingers. What is good for one player can be terrible for another. I have a little Oriental girl with fingers that are so short, her thumb has to come off the shoulder of the fiddle when she plays in the upper positions. So what! If she plays well and in tune, she can play with her feet as far as I'm concerned. In short—the student must be trained to use his own head in choosing fingerings as in every other department of playing, both in problems of technique and interpretation. No—there is no substitute for learning how to think for one's self."

We agreed whole-heartedly.

Ricci had been so candid, blunt and outspoken, with no recourse whatsoever to evasiveness, we decided to ask him a question which certain other artists of more timid persuasion might prefer to sidestep.

"Mr. Ricci, " we queried, "what do you think of music critics? Are they angels or assassins?"

The dynamic virtuouso responded instantly. "They can be both. I have personally no onus against music critics. My batting average with them has always been very high. Most critics have said very nice things about my playing—a few, of course, less nice. But you see, I don't resent being criticized by someone who really knows the ins and outs of violin playing. After all, we all have our off days. What I do resent is being criticized dishonestly by some unknowledgeable faker who knows nothing about the violin.

"Let me tell you this story. Once I prepared a most difficult and unusual program with a pianist. We worked on it like dogs for three months. We played a most excellent concert. Everything went just right. For our reward, we got slam-banged by a certain critic. It seems he didn't like the type of music we played, and in punishment for this 'sin' he roasted us.

"Another time, I played a joint concert with a guitarist. We had very little practice time. Everything went awry in the concert. I was very upset. Next day we got a 'rave' review. The concert was a 'novelty,' and the critic cottoned to novelty. This whole critic thing can be like Russian roulette. Sometimes just playing well isn't enough. An artist needs the help of Lady Luck, too."

In evaluating the art of Ruggiero Ricci, some observers tend to label him as a mere violinistic 'gymnast,' and while it is true that it is as a 'gymnast' that he has enjoyed many of his most spectacular successes, the Ricci repertory has gradually encompassed an extraordinary musical gamut.

In addition to the standard repertoire, he has fearlessly taken on such complex contemporary challenges as the Ginastera Concerto, and is, at this writing, the only violinist to have recorded the complete Ysaye "Six Solo Sonatas." More than any other violinist, he has delved into the nooks and crannies of now almost forgotten deviltries by Paganini, Ernst, Wieniawski, Vecsey, et al. His Decca disc, "Bravura," represents the epitome of elemental finger-and-bow swashbuckling, in which, among other things, are included Paganini's "Variations on a Theme by Joseph Weigl" and "God Save the Queen" Variations, Wieniawski's "Variations on the Austrian National Anthem" and Ernst's "Variations on The Last Rose of Summer." Recently in New York he featured a multi-

After the concert, Dr. and Mrs. Axelrod and Mrs. Ricci join the maestro in his large steak feast! Like most artists, Maestro Ricci doesn't eat before the concert.

Ricci is a fine physical specimen. He has nerves of steel and muscles of iron! Being able to play the most difficult violin pieces takes no more effort from him than playing the most simple pieces. He claims to stay in condition by lots of practice.

concert festival of major violin concerti with four different conductors presiding over the orchestra. His physical stamina, as a violinist, is incredible.

Ruggiero Ricci represents violin art in bold, bright perspective, and his explosive pyrotechnics, recalling the heroic gestures and musical naiveté of a less complex age, will long inspire violinists everywhere to feats of 'derring-do'.

Jascha Heifetz

Granting a rare interview, master violinist Jascha Heifetz selected his biographer, Dr. Herbert R. Axelrod, as the "messenger" to present his 77th birthday report to his admirers.

The meeting took place at Heifetz' retreat on the shore of the Pacific Ocean in Malibu Beach, California on 3rd February 1978. It was a beautifully warm sunny day; the pair, dressed casually, chose to sit in the warm sun to chat. Heifetz had promised to answer Axelrod's specific questions, pose for a few ("Very few!" he warned) publicity photographs and to dispel any fears that his recent arm surgery put him "out of business." He put on a brave show, broken rib and painful hip notwithstanding.

The historic meeting was to celebrate Heifetz' 77th birthday, yet he looked and acted like a much younger man. His voice and actions were strong and determined and he always had a ready smile. More than once he countered Axelrod's prying questions with "That's for me to know and for you to find out!" He continued bolting cliches together to strengthen his conversation.

Axelrod was researching a sequel to his "unauthorized" biography of Heifetz, but he promised Heifetz not to publish the companion volume while Heifetz still lived. Permission was granted, however, to report this exclusive interview in *The Way They Play.*

The two were obviously friendly as they chatted on and on about subjects ranging from Heifetz' early youth as a ten-year-old student of Prof. Leopold Auer, to his demand that if 13-14-year-old students want to study with him, "They'll find a way to escape parental guidance and live in L.A."

The meetings between Heifetz and Axelrod will be the basis for the new book Axelrod will do on Heifetz, "after the master's death," as Axelrod put it, "unless I go first." Axelrod is a youthful, healthy 50 years old, having been born on the same day of the year as Heifetz' violin teacher, Prof. Auer, June 7th. Axelrod's father, by the way, also was an Auer violin student and his birthday coincides exactly with that of Heifetz, 2nd February 1901, both having been born in Russia. Axelrod's father was Axelrod's first violin teacher, just as Heifetz' first teacher was his father.

If you peer over a fence about 7 ft. high, this is the view you will get of Jascha Heifetz' retreat in Malibu Beach, California. The trees on the left are delicious orange fruit-bearing trees.

Axelrod: "What do you consider the most difficult pieces in the violin repertoire? Ernst, Paganini . . . ?"

Heifetz: "No. Everybody has technical ability today, that's taken for granted. But let them play a Mozart Concerto . . . or Beethoven . . . yes, they are the most difficult to perform properly. And I'm talking technically, too. I have played the Ernst and Paganini Concerti in concert, as a child. If you have technic, you can play them. Anyone can. But so few play Mozart or Beethoven."

A: "What was your practice routine as a child? Did you only practice in the presence of your father?"

H: "My practice habits are my personal secret. Probably I practiced most when my father was home because of the strict discipline of the times. But I did rebel and locked myself in my room to practice alone. My father told me he understood and it was O.K. Even to this day I cannot practice with anyone around. It is annoying. I can't concentrate. No one can be present when I practice."

A: "How did you memorize music?"

H: "Reading it; studying it; playing it over and over. You never can be too prepared. The violin literature is so huge."

A: "What is your favorite piece of music?"

H: "Every interviewer asked the same thing. How can I say what I like? There is so much beautiful music. But the Mozart and Beethoven Concerti are special. They are the most difficult, too."

A: What is your favorite violin? Is one easier to play than the other?"

H: "I prefer the (Guarnerius) "del Gesu" over the Strad. It sounds better to me. It is more sonorous. I sold my Strad years ago and for many years have only used my "del Gesu" in concert. No. One is not easier to play than the other. I use still other violins for teaching and practicing."

A: "How about bows?"

H: "I prefer my Kittel that Prof. Auer gave me as a gift a long time ago. But I don't always use it. I have others. The Kittel must rest. It gets tired . . . sometimes it needs hair."

A: "You recorded many violin concerti and small pieces, why did you not record some of the difficult concerti like the Paganini and Ernst pieces?"

H: "I played these in public as you know, preferring the Wilhelmij version of the Paganini. But I never felt my technique was so perfect that I cared to make a public record of my performance. In those days, there was no dubbing or splicing!

A: "Is it true your father would not let you practice when he was not there to supervise?"

H: "I would rather talk about the present than the past. Some of it was a dark, dark past!"

A: "During our last meeting, you told me you were going to concertize again. Have you made any definite plans?"

H: "I suppose I was nervous during our last meeting. Why don't we give the youngsters a chance to concertize? I have already done my concertizing. I have no plans for any further concertizing."

A: "Do you have any advice to help me with my left-hand pizzicato?"

H: "No advice. I give advice to students at school. It would be an individual thing. Everybody has their own problems with left-hand pizzicato and down-bow staccato. Come to my class and listen. But remember, I charge for my lessons and I don't like to take money from my friends!"

A: "When I contacted Mrs. Castelnuovo-Tedesco, she asked me if I could persuade you to release the recordings that you made of her husband's two violin concerti."

H: "I do not release records. That is up to the record company. I did record the concerti. Once with Toscanini, which I don't think was released. It was a long time ago. I did the second concerto with Wallenstein and the Los Angeles Philharmonic. RCA released it in 1954. It was such a long time ago I don't know why the other concerto was not released. I had nothing to do with it."

A: "What is the best way to memorize music? What do you suggest?"

H: "Routine and discipline."

A: "Would you play it over and over again? Section by section, line by line?"

H: "I'd rather not answer that question. That is my trade secret.It's different for every person anyway, and that's "for me to know and you to find out!"

Jascha Heifetz with his biographer, Dr. Herbert R. Axelrod, at the occasion of Heifetz' 77th birthday celebrated on February 2nd, 1978.

A: Do you have any recollections of Poliakin? My father and Benno used to talk about him quite a bit."

H: "Yes. I remember him very well. His first name was Myron. I saw him when I played in Russia in 1934. He was a student of Auer's at the same time I was. He played a Guadagnini violin. I remember that, too. But he was a bit lazy. He always had an excuse for Prof. Auer why he wouldn't be prepared. It was the weather, or he needed strings, or he just got new strings. Prof. Auer always would ask him "What is it this time?"

A: "You had a very special relationship with Prof. Auer. Can you tell us about it?"

H: "As you know, Jews in Russia were restricted to their ghetto. They could not leave without special permission. When I played for Prof. Auer and he accepted me as a student, I was still a baby, less than ten years old. I could not live in St. Petersburg alone. So Prof. Auer also accepted my father as his violin student; that enabled us to get permission to stay out of the ghetto and live in St. Petersburg so I could study with Prof. Auer. I was very scared of the Professor until I grew up a little. Later, when the Professor's assistant, an Armenian named Nalbandian,* came to see me in America, I was able to repay some of my debt to Prof. Auer by giving him "coupons" to help him across the ocean to America." (Note: Heifetz wouldn't elaborate what the "coupons" were. It seems that HIAS, the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, issued coupons which were used for transport from Russia to America. If money was sent, it often disappeared from the mails!).

A: "How about in your later life?"

H: "Prof. Auer was always very special."

A: "Did you discuss your programming with him?"

H: "No. I already decided upon my programs before I visited Prof. Auer. I would play my programs through completely for him. Then we would have lunch and discuss the music. He would always make valuable criticisms . . . or suggestions. When I was

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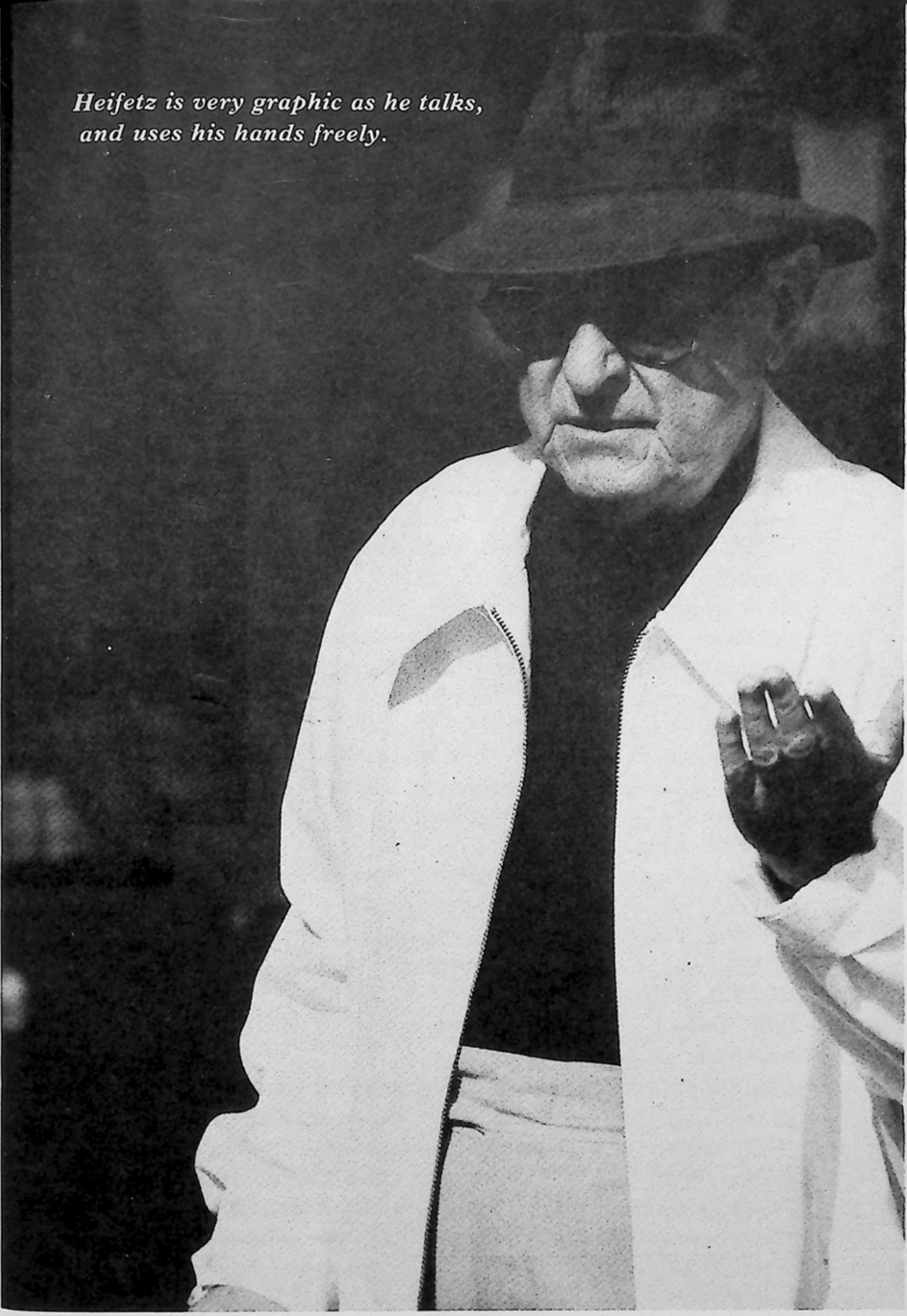
* According to Heifetz, Americans don't pronounce Armenian names correctly. Prof. Galamian's name, for example, is pronounced properly as Gal-ah-MÉ-an, with the heavy accent on the ME. So is Nal-ban-DÍ-an.



Heifetz is very graphic as he talks, and uses his hands freely.

young, my father always escorted me to Prof. Auer and would be present for my lessons."

A: "When we were discussing my book *"Heifetz"* during our meeting last month, you said I had the Epstein story all garbled. My understanding of the story is that after being your page turner for almost 25 years, he only said "Good morning, Mr. Heifetz," or "Good day, Mr. Heifetz." Finally, after your recording of the Saint-Saens *Rondo Capriccioso,* he couldn't contain himself and told Benno Rabinof that it was a magnificent performance. Benno told him to tell you. Rather hesitantly he did so and you remarked "So I finally played something you liked?" Is this a true story?"

H: "I don't remember exactly. It was such a long time ago. I remember he lived in Brooklyn. I met his wife, too. But this was Benno's story, not mine."

A: "What specific criticisms do you have of the unauthorized biography I wrote about you?"

H: "First, I think the captions of the pictures are sarcastic and demeaning. For example, on page 476 you wrote about Isaac Stern and said he had associates who "love and admire him" and that I have no such relationships. This isn't true and is pure malice on your part."

A: I am sorry that you feel that way, Mr. Heifetz. But you don't have such a relationship. You haven't helped any artists give concerts, get jobs, or given them financial support or brought them over from Israel like Isaac did."

H: "You are wrong! I have plenty of such relationships. Ask the students, that would be the best reference."

A: "Which of your students do you think I should call? Which students do you believe you have a personal relationship with?"

H: "With all of them!"

"Moscow State Symphony Orchestra, in the large conservatory hall, 13th of April, 1934. Concert, J. Heifetz (New York) with the Moscow State Symphony Orchestra, conductor Prof. A.J. Orlov. Program: Mozart concerto for Violin with Orchestra in A-major. Brahms' Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, Opus 77. Mendelssohn Concerto for Violin with Orchestra, Opus 64 in E-minor. Beginning at 8:30 P.M."

МОСКОВСКАЯ ГОСУДАРСТВЕННАЯ ФИЛАРМОНИЯ
БОЛЬШОЙ ЗАЛ КОНСЕРВАТОРИИ

---

13 апреля 1934 г.

КОНЦЕРТ

Я. ХЕЙФЕЦ (Нью-Иорк)

Участвует оркестр Московской Государственной Филармонии

Дириж. проф. А. И. ОРЛОВ.

ПРОГРАММА:

I.

Концерт № 5 для скрипки с орк. A-dur. **МОЦАРТ**
1. Allegro
2. Adagio
3. Tempo di Menuetto.

Концерт для скрипки с оркестром op. 77 **БРАМС**
1. Allegro non troppo
2. Adagio
3. Allegro giocoso ma non troppo vivace.

II.

Концерт для скрипки с оркестром

op. 64 E-moll . . . . **МЕНДЕЛЬСОН**
1. Allegro molto appassionato
2. Andante
3. Allegro molto vivace. (без перерыва)

Начало в 8 ч. 30 м. веч.

Мособлит 2807-13|IV-34 Тип „Сталинка" Вадковск. п., д. 3-а. зак 226 Тир. 1200

"The most difficult violin concerti are those by Mozart and Beethoven."

A: "Which, Mr. Heifetz? Please be specific."

H: "Sherry Kloss. You can get her address and the names and addresses of my other students from the Dean of all the Arts at USC, Dr. Grant Beglarian."

A: "How about some others?"

H: "Tony Sen. He's a Hungarian. Then there's Arkady. I also have an assistant named Yuriko Kamei. She was a former student. I also have another former student, Ayke Agus. She plays both violin and piano."

A: "Was Erick Friedman one of your former students? What sort of relatationship did you have with him?"

H: "I did make a record with Friedman. I do not care to discuss my relationship with him."

A: "Was Fodor one of your students, too?"

H: "Yes. His first name was Eugene. But we are getting back to the same thing. I do not want to discuss my personal relationships with these people."

A: "But you criticized my "malicious" caption and said you have meaningful relationships with your students. Please help me to clarify this point since it is very important historically. Other than Erick Friedman, have you made recordings with any other student?"

H: "No. As far as I can recall, Friedman was the only one."

A: "How long have you known Friedman?"

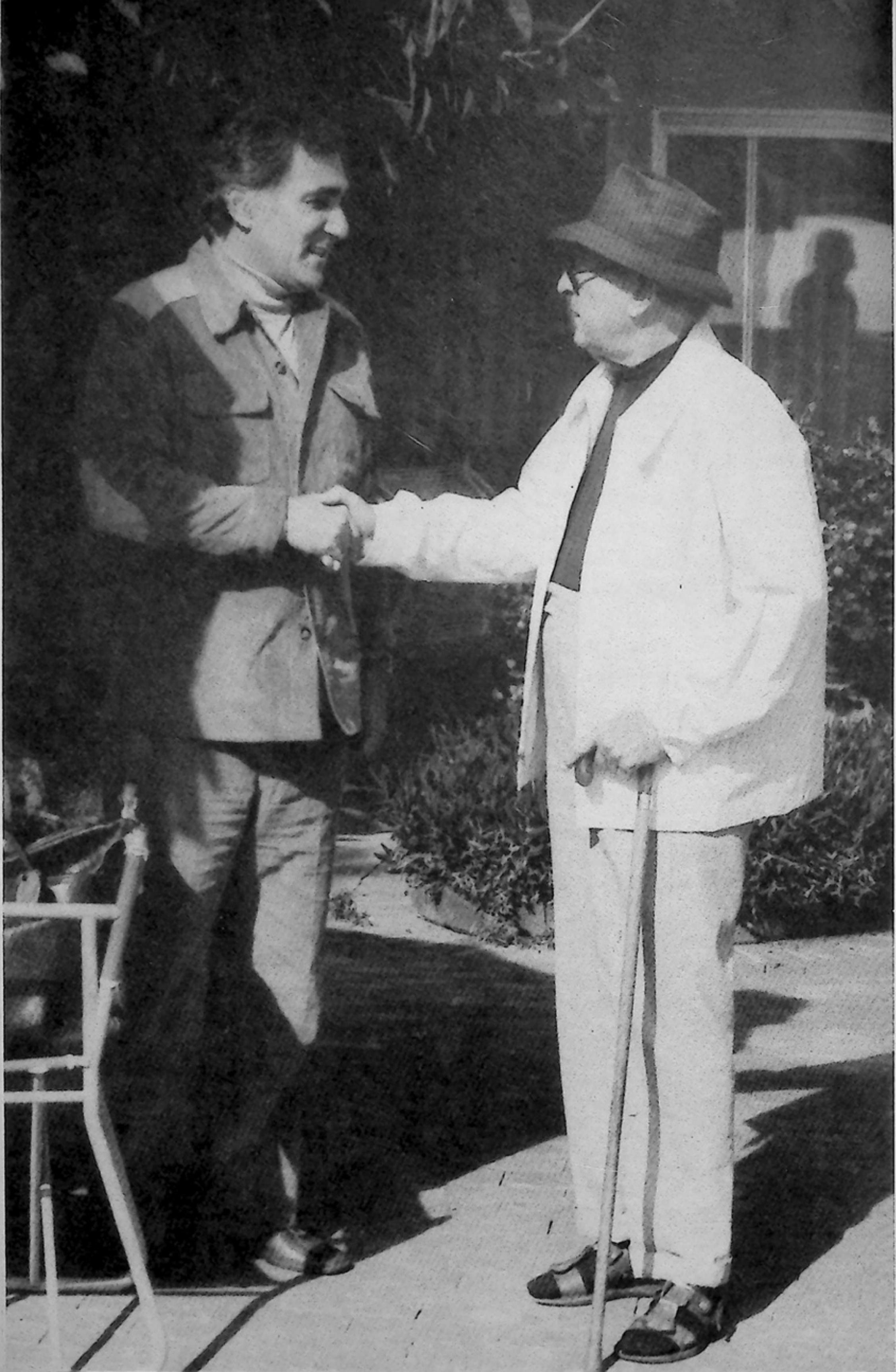
H: "I can tell you only very roughly. Oh, perhaps, 10, 12 or 15 years. He was with me for a while as a student. We made the rcording in London. We made the recording after he was my student for two or three years."

A: "When did you last see Friedman?"

H: "Four, five, six or seven years ago."

A: "What other errors or mistakes did you find in the book I wrote about you?"

H: "I didn't write the article on page 126. The picture on page 484 is Lillian Steuber. She is deceased, but well known at USC where she taught for many years and also made recordings with me. On page 484 that is not Daniel Pollack but Leonard Pennario. He is an internationally known pianist and also has made several recordings with me. No other mistakes."



Dr. Axelrod called Sherry Kloss and spoke to Friedman and Fodor. Sherry Kloss and the two internationally famed artists spoke very highly of Mr. Heifetz as a person, as an artist and as a teacher. Sherry Kloss has never seen Mr. Heifetz' "del Gesu." But she said he helped her in formulating a beautiful philosphy of life and that he was a very great person. The two artists, Friedman and Fodor, both claimed they learned a lot of violin from Heifetz and he is undoubtedly the greatest violinist in the world. However, they never achieved a "friendly," personal relationship with Heifetz in the sense that he got them concerts or jobs of any sort, never allowed them to touch his violin (though he did try out Friedman's "Strad" and remarked "You should have gotten a del Gesu.") Neither of them ever called him anything but a formal "Mr. Heifetz." They both described their relationship with Heifetz as being very formal and a typical student-professor relationship. But in Axelrod's discussions with these artists, they both loved him for his great ability as a violinist and his attempt to convey to them his best. Both said they learned more from watching him play than from what he specifically said.

Irrespective of any personal exchanges and debates with Heifetz, Dr. Axelrod characterizes the violinist, Heifetz, in these words:

"When Moses came down from the mountain, he gave the world God's *Ten Commandments* for a civilized, peaceful life and thereby founded and set the standard for culture as we know it in the modern sense.

"When Heifetz walked onto the platform in Carnegie Hall for the first time, more than 60 years ago, he set the standard for violin playing. Neither Moses' gift to the world, nor Heifetz' violin playing, has been duplicated or surpassed to this day."

Axelrod and Heifetz. Indicating their renewed friendship, Axelrod and Heifetz shake hands at the conclusion of the interview which is essentially stated above.

Murray Grodner

Murray Grodner was born August 23, 1922 in New York City. His double bass instructors were Morris Tivin (1937-1940) and Fred Zimmerman (1941), both members of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra. He was awarded student scholarships from the New York Philharmonic Symphony Society (1938, 1939), the Manhattan School of Music (1940) and the Juilliard School of Music (1941). Grodner's career as a teacher began in 1941. He taught at the Manhattan School of Music (1953-1955), from which he received his Bachelor of Music degree and Master of Music degree, and then joined the string department faculty of the University of Indiana, of which he is currently a leading member and professor. He has been a member of the N.B.C. Symphony under Toscanini, the Pittsburgh Symphony (Assistant Principal) under Reiner, the Chautauqua Symphony (Assistant Principal) under Franco Autori and the Houston Symphony (Principal) under Efrem Kurtz, and he has made guest artist appearances with the Berkshire, Gordon and Fine Arts quartets. Among the companies for which Grodner has recorded are Columbia, RCA and Vox. A member of the Baroque Chamber Players, and an ensemble of faculty members in residence at Indiana University, he has toured widely throughout the eastern and central United States. The noted bassist has appeared extensively as a solo recitalist, guest clinician-lecturer at music camps, public schools and major universities, and is a prominent author of essays, articles and other material related to the double bass. Grodner pupils hold positions in the N.Y. Philharmonic and the Minnesota Symphony orchestra, and the symphony orchestras of Dallas, Cincinnati, St. Louis, Buffalo, Louisville, Montreal and Indianapolis. He is married and has two children.

Our interview had scarcely gotten under way when we were struck by the realization that Murray Grodner was a musician eminently 'in love' with his instrument. In fact, even before we could proceed with our questions, Grodner volunteered—

"The most versatile member of the string family, in many ways, is the string bass." It was an unequivocal statement.

"Explain!" we requested.

"Well, the string bass is used in almost every type of large ensemble except," he chuckled, "the marching band. It provides the player with more performance opportunities than other in-

Murray Grodner, one of the most talented of the double bassists.

struments because it is used in so many different kinds of musical combinations."

Admittedly, we had never thought of the issue in that light. Grodner continued emphatically - "There is a thrill, a satisfaction to be derived from playing the bass that is equal to that experienced in playing any other instrument!'"

"Yes," we replied. "We have noticed the great dedication that symphony orchestra bassists devote to their instruments—and their social clannishness, as well."

Grodner nodded. "I know what you mean. As for me, I have never for an instant regretted becoming a bassist. I am sorry, however, about one thing."

"And that?" we queried.

"That the bass has such a limited role in chamber music of the 18th and 19th centuries. This is where our role in music making has been very neglected. To have such a dearth of involvement in the music of the masters in this field is a bass player's eternal frustration."

"But," we asked, "is it not easier to learn the bass than the violin, viola or cello?" It was a 'baiting' question, and we knew it.

Grodner's response was instantaneous. "Yes, I admit that one can become proficient enough to play in an ensemble more quickly as a bassist than on one of the other three strings, but it is not true that mastery of the bass is any easier or requires less talent. It is the comparatively less demanding bass line in the orchestra which makes it possible to train a bassist more quickly for his role in ensemble playing. But," he stressed, "it takes at least as much work and talent to play similar passages on one string instrument as on another.

"Consider this," he went on. "In the performance of, let us say, a Mozart Symphony such as No. 35, 40 or 41, the bassist must cover a much larger area of the finger-board in order to play the same passage as the other strings. And he must be just as musically competent in phrasing. Did you ever stop to think that playing an artistic accompanying line is perhaps even more demanding, musically, since the bassist must constantly adjust his line to coincide with the primary musical thought? For this, he must always listen carefully and analytically. Sensitivity of balance is ever all-important in the lower line. Following is not always easier than leading. And getting back to the question of instrumental difficulties, you must remember that as our contemporary music develops, the role of the string bass, and the demands made upon it by composers, grows ever larger and more complex."

Grodner had made his points. We changed the subject. "Would you comment on the string bass literature?"

He thought for a moment, then said, "I would suppose that the Baroque era still offers the largest potential for string bass players in chamber music. You see, in all Baroque ensemble combinations, a continuo, usually consisting of a bass instrument and harpsichord, is required. And even when that bass instrument is a bassoon, cello or viola da gamba, the string bass can be profitably substituted as an alternative, at least, in most instances."

We knew that during Grodner's association with the Baroque Chamber Players, consisting of flute, oboe, harpsichord and string bass, both audience and critics had often expressed their preference of the string bass, as played by Grodner, to the other instruments customarily used for the bass line. In such a role, the inherent solidity of the string bass is quite unique.

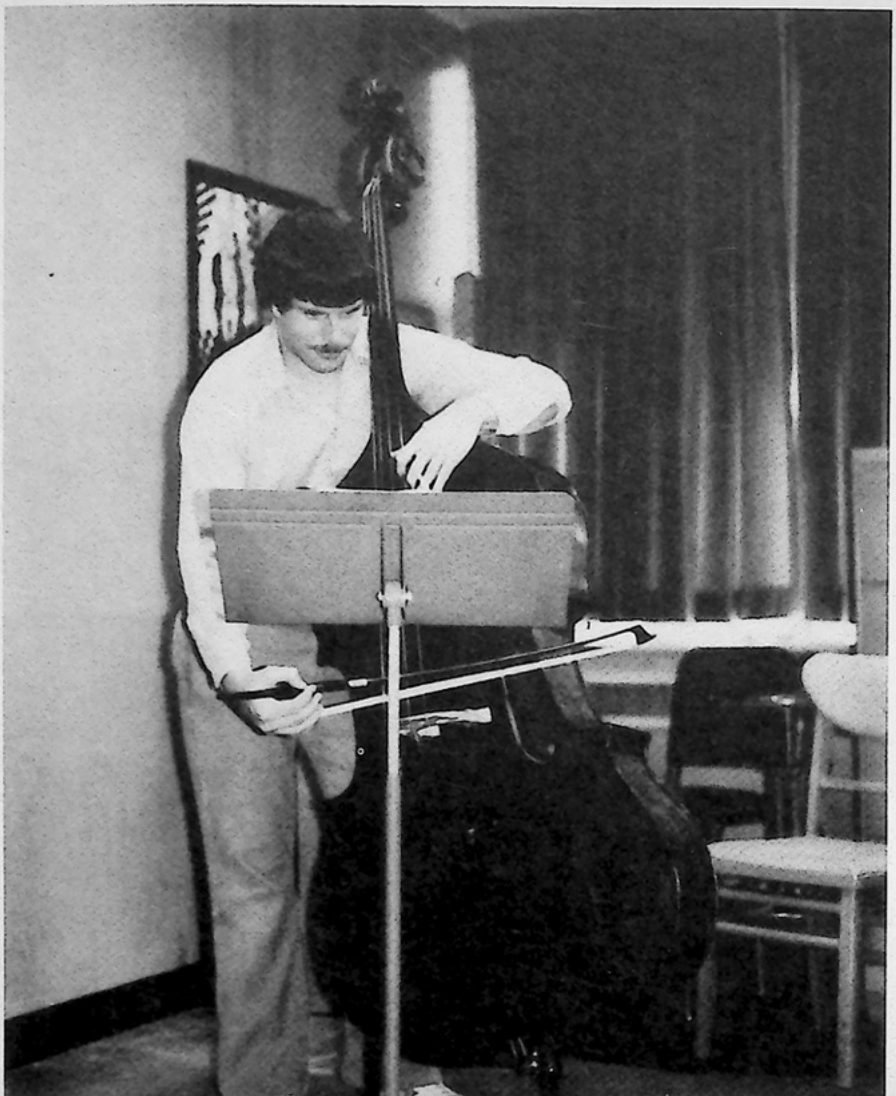
Grodner with students after a rehearsal of the Indiana University Philharmonic. The young lady at the right is Lynn Peters, a member of the Detroit Symphony bass section. Second from the left is Michael Geller, now in the Orleans Philharmonic and Grant Park Symphony Orchestra of Chicago.

We asked Grodner about various facets of teaching.

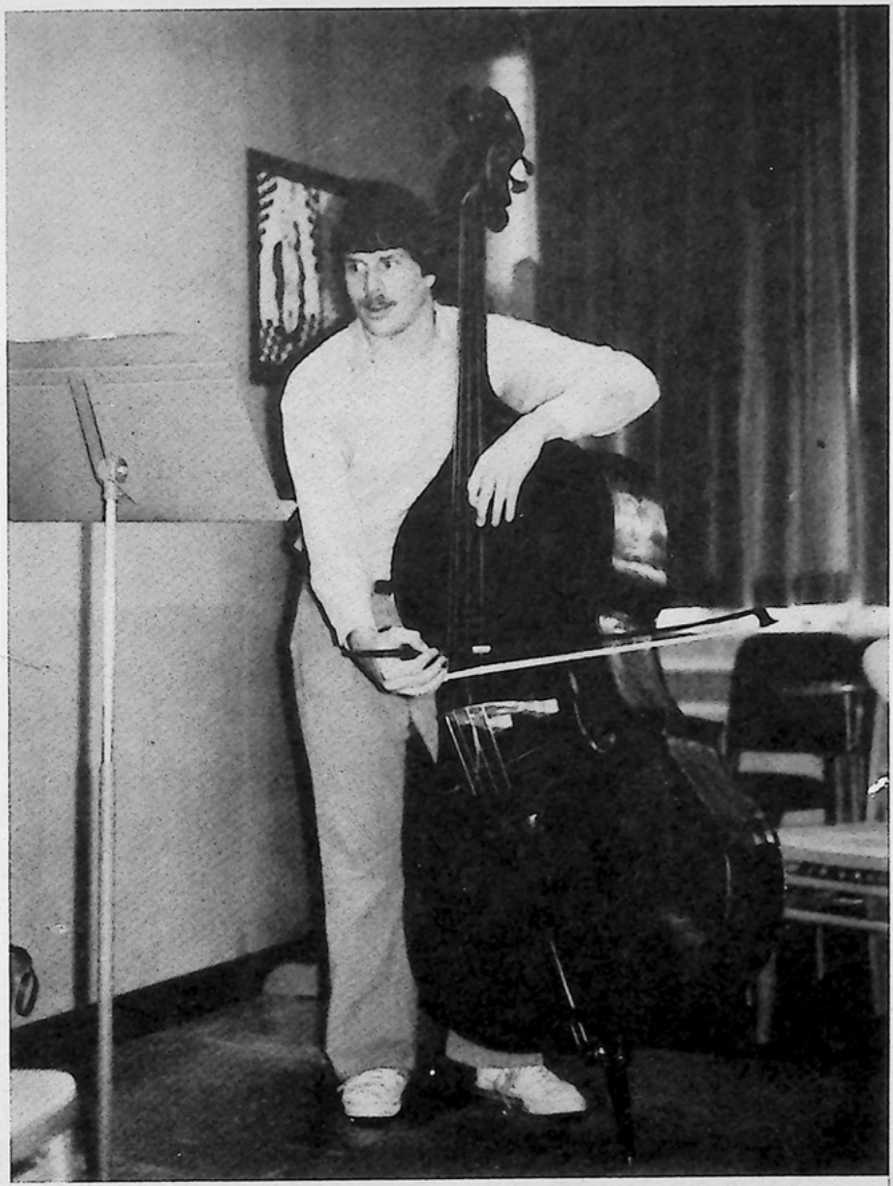
"Training a class of double bassists," he pointed out, "means being prepared to work with the same basic techniques of string playing as one would require for the other string instruments. The left and right hands must go through essentially similar maneuvers as on the other strings, but on a physically larger scale."

"Tell us some of the problems you encounter."

"Well, in general, I think it is of vital importance to find the most easily understood directions for introducing or correcting technical work in a manner that does not confuse the individual.



This is the correct position for the placement and height of the music stand. The placement and height of the stand on the facing page is incorrect. Unfortunately, due to orchestral tradition, the placement cannot always be arranged so that the head alignment can be properly achieved as it is in the picture above. In many orchestral situations, two players share a single stand, even causing more incorrect body alignment and poor visibility.



A typical example of the misuse of the music stand, causing the head to turn away from the instrument and for a more upright position than is beneficial to proper leverage when playing in higher positions. See the picture on the facing page for a better music stand placement. Also notice the lowered height, allowing the head to to align itself naturally with the torso when leaning forward in the upper positions.

We are all guilty, at one time or another, of giving instructions in terminology that is either too meticulous or too involved for the beginner student to grasp. For example, in discussing the function of the bow, we must describe *what the bow actually does,* with a minimum of verbalizing about the complexities of creating bowing strokes."

We asked for more practical elucidation. "How would you approach teaching spiccato to a pupil?"

"I would first have the student bounce the bow on the string by drumming the hair rather than by explaining the complicated finger and arm movements involved. The arm does not move back and forth to produce a stroke, but merely goes through a motion similar to using a snare drum stick.

"All this requires only a slight rotation of the arm, striking the string with the bow and establishing a rhythmic pattern. Once this is accomplished, the arm can begin to move back and forth as the drumming continues and a spiccato stroke begins to take shape. Some students, of course, will bounce the bow too high; others will use too much bow laterally at the beginning. Then we must explain that too high a bounce results in lack of clarity and control, whereas too large an arm stroke laterally produces an indecisive brushing sound of bow against string and loss of centering the point of contact."

We asked about shifting.

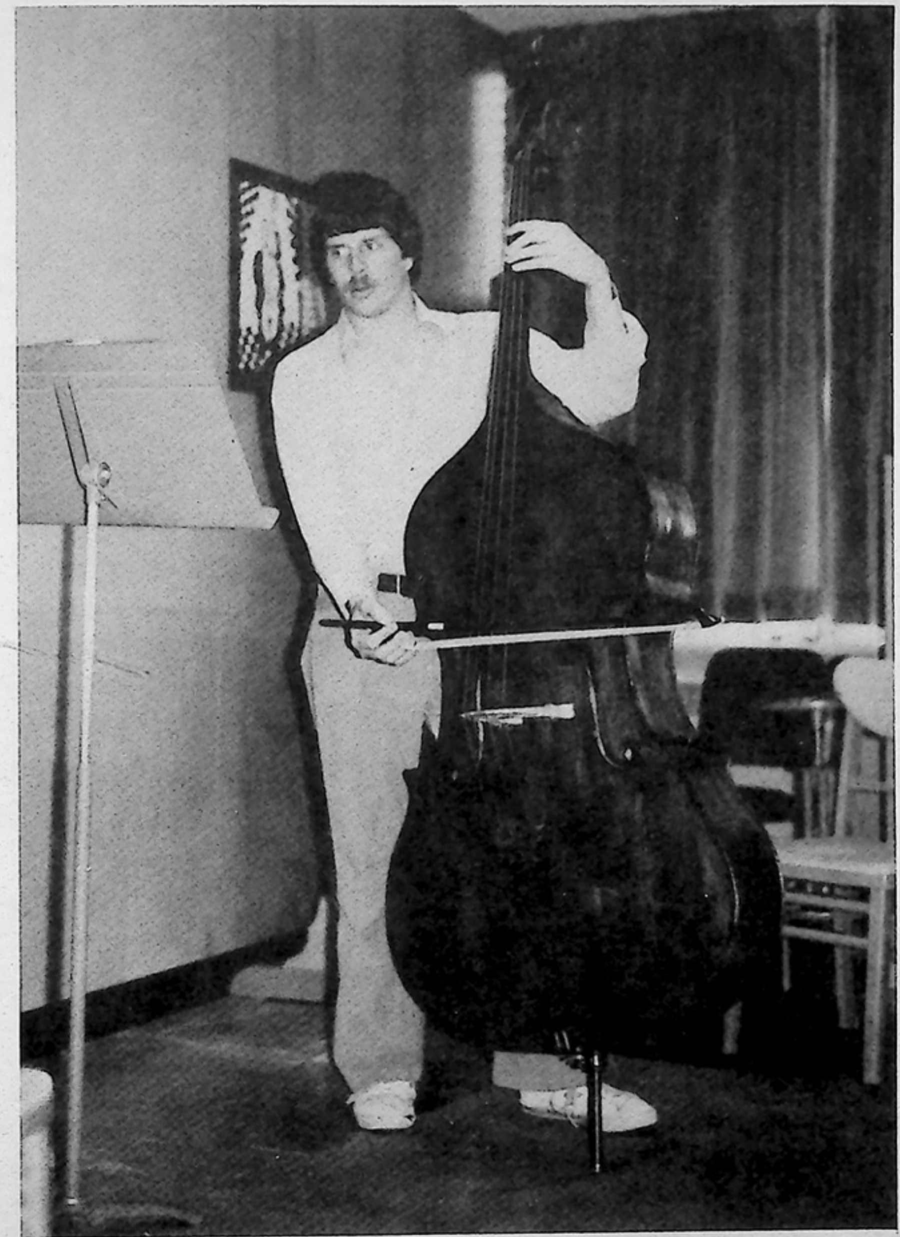
Grodner advised, "In shifting, I suggest that the student diminish the attention paid to the hand and concentrate on the arm, inasmuch as it is actually the arm that shifts the fingers rather than the fingers themselves. Once this is properly understood, the resulting relaxation will ease the entire shifting syndrome."

"What are your ideas on tuning the bass?"

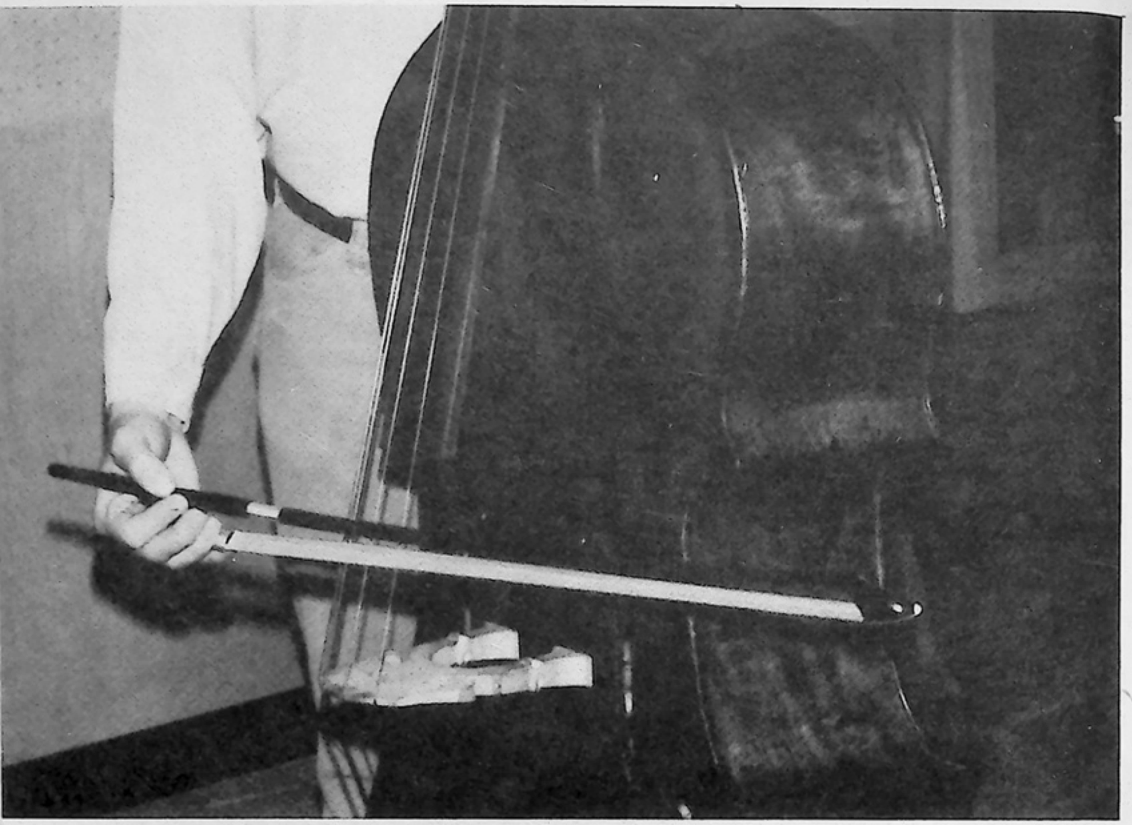
"I feel that the student must carefully listen to a correctly pitched "A" until he or she can reproduce that pitch with his or her own voice. Then they are ready to transfer this "A" to their own instrument. I oppose the practice of tuning by employing harmonics that are too loud or forced as they distort the harmonics and consequently mislead the ear."

"Do you feel that scale practice is of major value?"

"Of course, and I teach all of the varied bowing strokes right along with properly fingered scales—legato, whole bows, spiccato,



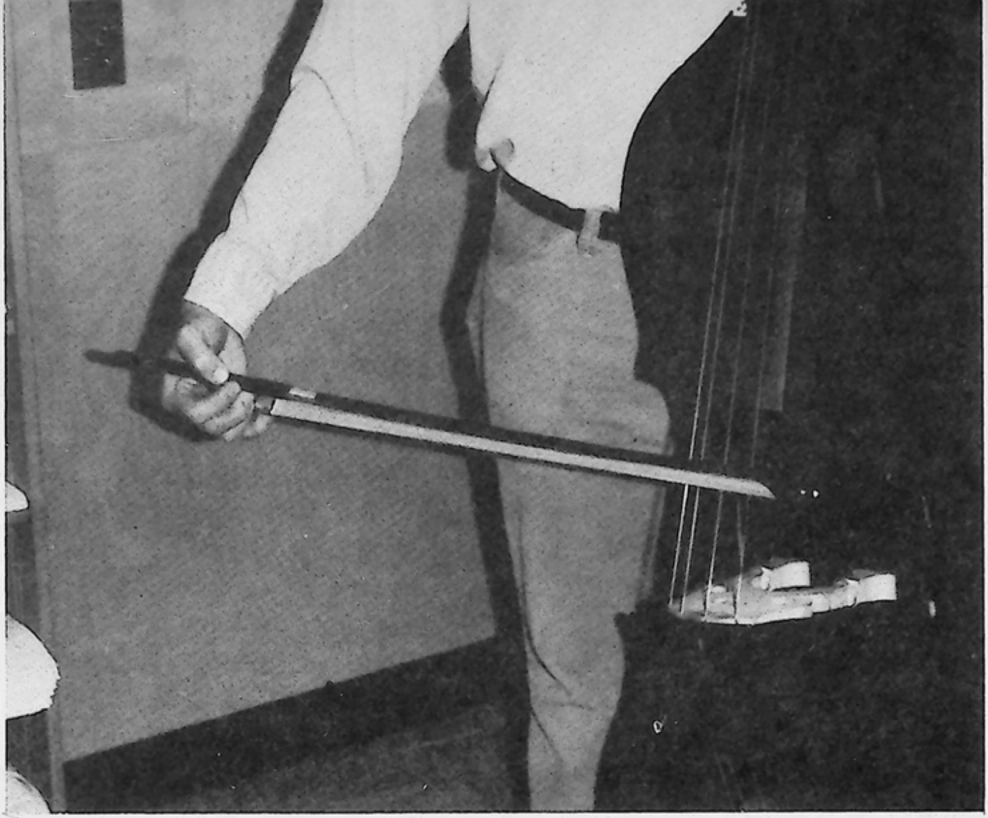
Another example of misalignment of the head due to the poor placement of the music stand. This is typical of an orchestral placement.

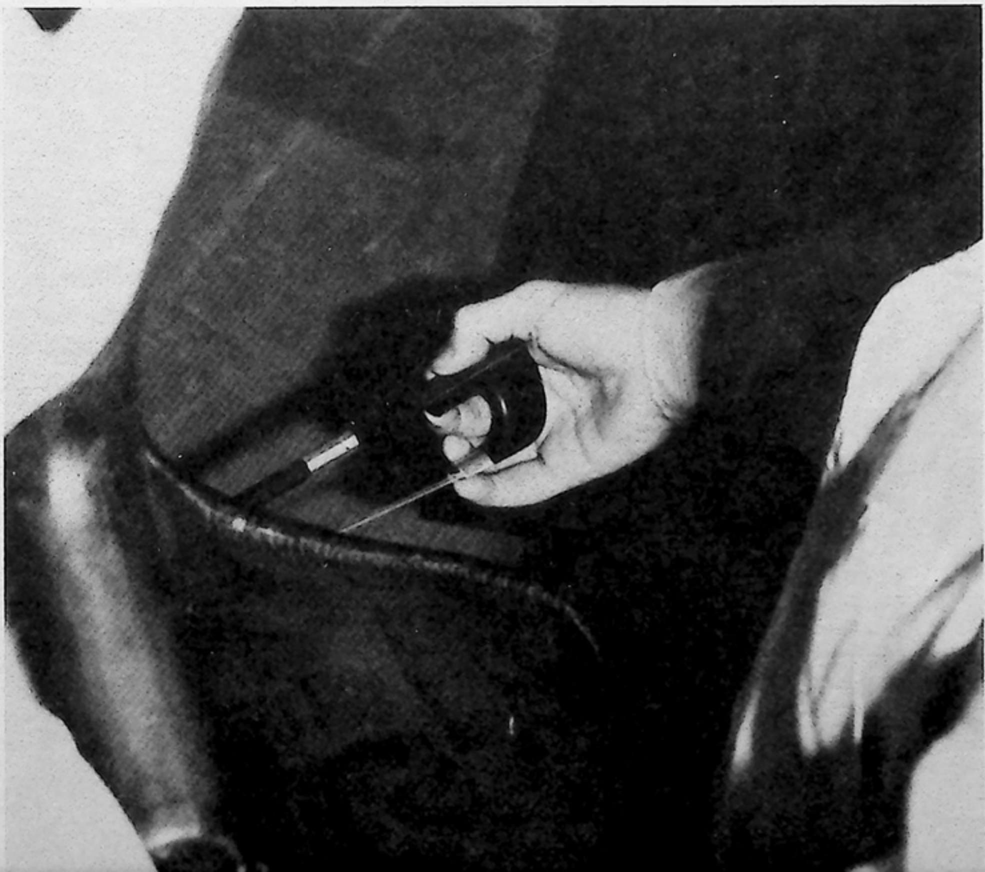


Above: A good example of the German bow grip. Note the look of mobility. There is no stiffness in the arm and hand. Very large fingers, moderately bent over, arm hanging at a proper length for the best leverage, are all characteristics of the German bow grip. The bow also sits in a good playing area on the G-string.

Facing page, top: Position of the bow and arm when extended for playing to the tip. Arm is still slightly bent at the elbow, fingers still rounded and strong, bow still maintaining proper angle to the string. Note how strong the thumb looks.

Facing page, bottom: a good view of the position of the German bow in the hand as the player should see it. Note again the natural contouring of the hand and strong positioning of the fingers. Note how contact points of the fingers are the same as used in most other activities, such as writing, manipulating objects, etc.





martelé, détaché, all combinations of slurring, etc. As soon as the student is able to bow single notes correctly, I proceed to scales.

"Further - I suggest that no notes be repeated in scale practice so that the resultant patterns are irregular. For instance, if three notes are slurred in playings of the scale in order for the bow to come out down-bow on the final tonic, it will take three uninterrupted playings of a two octave scale, but only one playing of a three octave scale. This causes the bowing and fingering to experience all possible combinations within one scale for a given bowing. Otherwise, repeating the tonic at any point in the scale not only distorts the pattern of some of the bowings but also sets up too much of a pattern regularity or habit which ultimately interferes with the student's ability to sight read passages that do not conform to the traditional repetition of tonics."

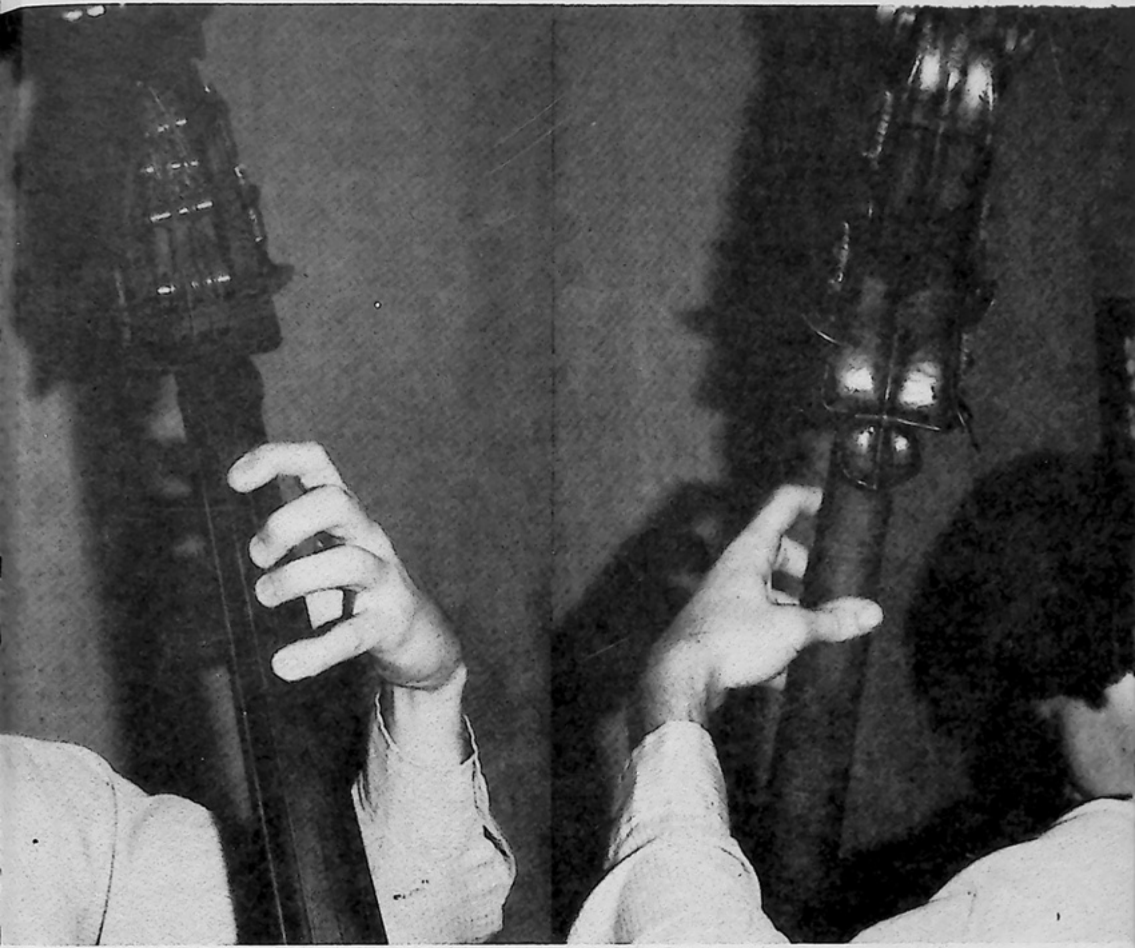
"How do you approach the study of vibrato?"

"I believe that at first vibrato should be learned by hearing and counting the oscillations. Next, vibrato should be applied to scales while still counting the oscillations. Once regularity is mastered at a beat-speed readily suited to the reflexes of the individual student, control of the varied vibrato speeds can be practiced and mastered."

We had heard of Grodner's investigations into the purely physical aspects of playing the double bass and asked him for some comments on the subject.

He remarked, "There is no question but that the double bass is too large for the physical structure and well-being of most of its performers. Those of us who have been involved with teaching over a long period of years have instinctively developed certain insights that help us to achieve a better or best posture. Yet, despite all our efforts, bass players continue to be plagued with tendonitis, bursitis, back pains and structural ailments of one kind or another. Even violinists and flutists, with their infinitely smaller instruments, can develop physical problems. After pondering the matter for years, I finally asked myself, have we ever gone to the scientific community for advice? The truth is, most of us responsible for the destiny of the double bass, and its performers, have not. I sought help."

"Were any of the people you contacted in the science fields able to offer you advice of an important nature?"



Left: A good example of left hand placement. Note the middle fingers are more toward the fingertips in string contact, but not on the very tip ends of the fingers, while the first and fourth fingers are placed more on the meaty pads of the fingers. The fourth finger, being shorter, cannot arch as much as the second and third finger, thus falling less toward the fingertips than the second and third finger.

Right: A rear view of a well-placed left hand. Note the arch between the thumb and the first finger which forms a rather nice round letter "C". All this provides strength and prevents tension. Using physically strong positions requires less effort, thus providing more physical comfort and avoiding unnecessary stiffening of the joints.

"Frankly, I found they had only limited knowledge of the type we seek and could add little to what performing bassists have been able to learn through practical experience. But even a little is better than nothing, and I admit that I have thus far only scratched the surface in regard to the scientific community."

"Can you be more specific about your research?"

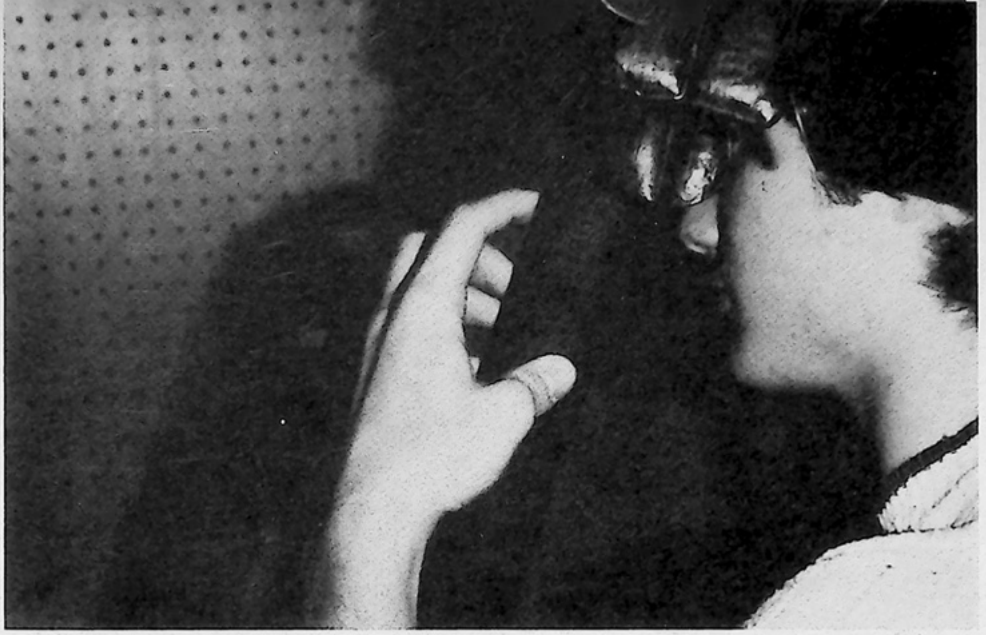
"Yes. Among other things, I took ten lessons in the Alexander Technique. Although this is only a brief introduction to this school of behavior, the experience was very valuable. The philosophy of the technique does not concern itself with the positive or negative aspect of the task one has to deal with, but rather with the best use of one's self in dealing with the task. The resistance to dealing with the positive or negative aspects of the task confronting an individual was somewhat disturbing to me, but one cardinal factor did become clear that should serve as a foundation to performing on the double bass."

"What is that?"

"It is simply the understanding that the physical ramification of handling the double bass should be approached in the same manner that a professional athlete uses his body. Factors of stance, body balance and distribution of body weights are all-important. The movements of a bassist must be as logical, mobile and graceful as those of a fine athlete."

"How would you sum up your findings in this area?"

"Our shoulders must not take us out of reach of the higher positions in thumb position; we must be certain the left arm is totally available to that portion of the fingerboard (from shoulder to finger tips). Our stance must always serve as a fulcrum of support for our ever-shifting body weight. Our heads must lead us to where we are going. All body joints must be free to move, never locked; firm but not stiff, so that the natural fluidity of body movement is never immobilized. Be certain that when one bends forward for the thumb position, the stance, rather than the back, supports the weight of the torso. The natural length of the arms should be utilized, but without being extended to the fullest, which locks the elbow joint causing unnecessary strain and tension. The bow arm should have the maximum access to the strings that the left side of the body will permit while dealing with the fingerboard. One should never twist the spine unnecessarily. Try always to

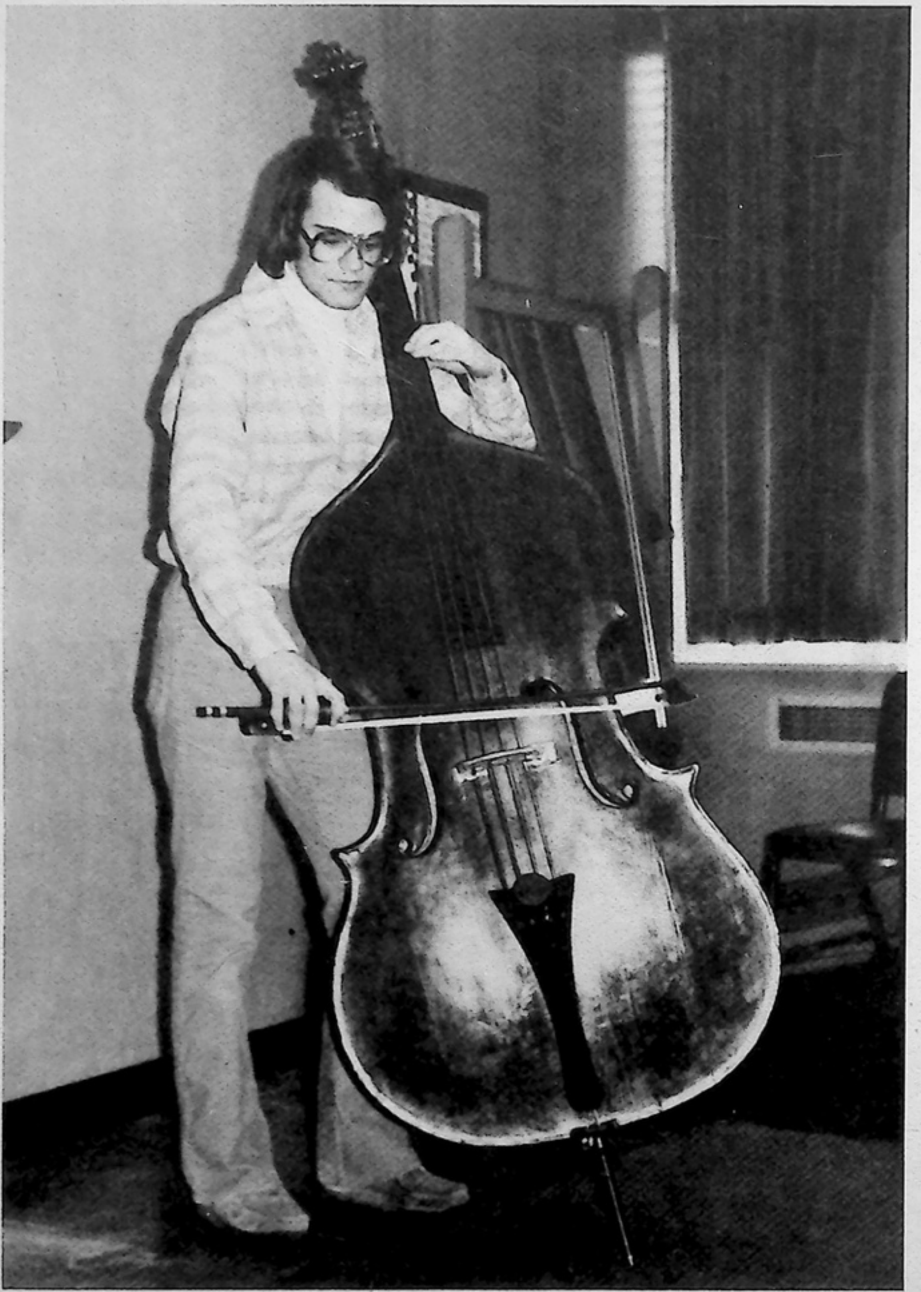


Another example of the placement of the left hand. Note this player points his thumb at the back of the neck. This results in the arch between the first finger and the thumb forming an almost V-shape where a vortex is created by the thumb and first finger.

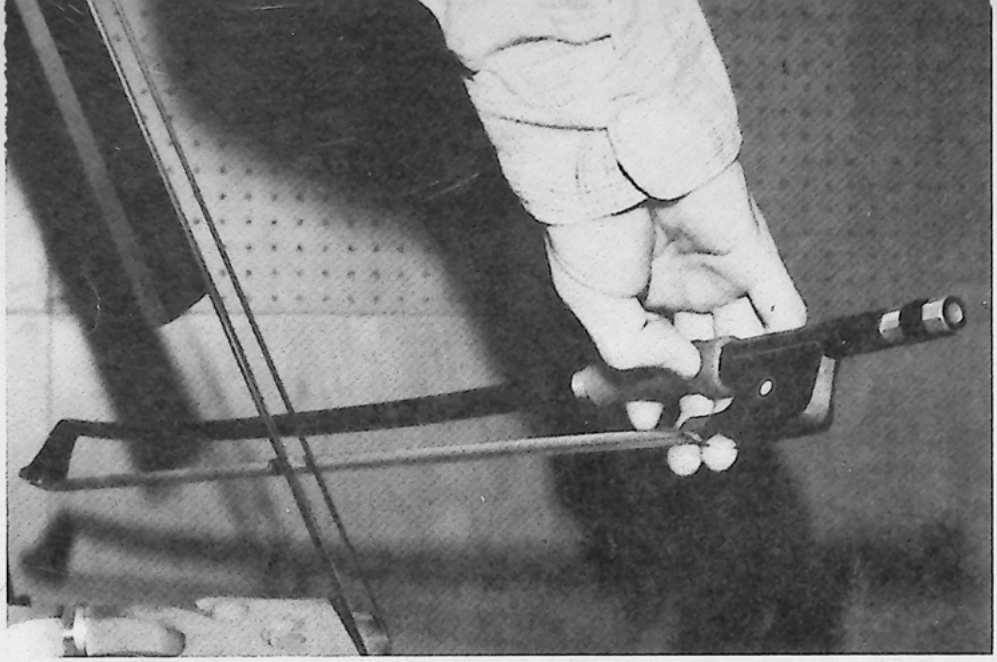
emulate the behavior of a fine, graceful athlete in all physical behavior on the double bass or any string instrument. I think it is possible for each one of us to guide ourselves toward healthier and more successful behavior on the double bass through these simple principles."

It all seemed to be judicious advice. We knew that Grodner had long been a highly vocal authority in the double bass community in the chronic debate over whether the French bow is, or is not, superior to the German bow. Since his career has included many years of comprehensive playing and teaching with both bows, we felt that his testimony on "The Battle of the Bows" would be an excellent subject with which to climax our interview. We broached the question and Grodner responded with the alacrity of a veteran fireman answering a fire bell.

"First of all," he said, "in addition to my own experience, I have discussed the matter with bassists of many countries. I have found prejudices in various quarters that remind me of the political hassles between contending parties. Why must it be so, considering that each school of bow has both strong and weak points?

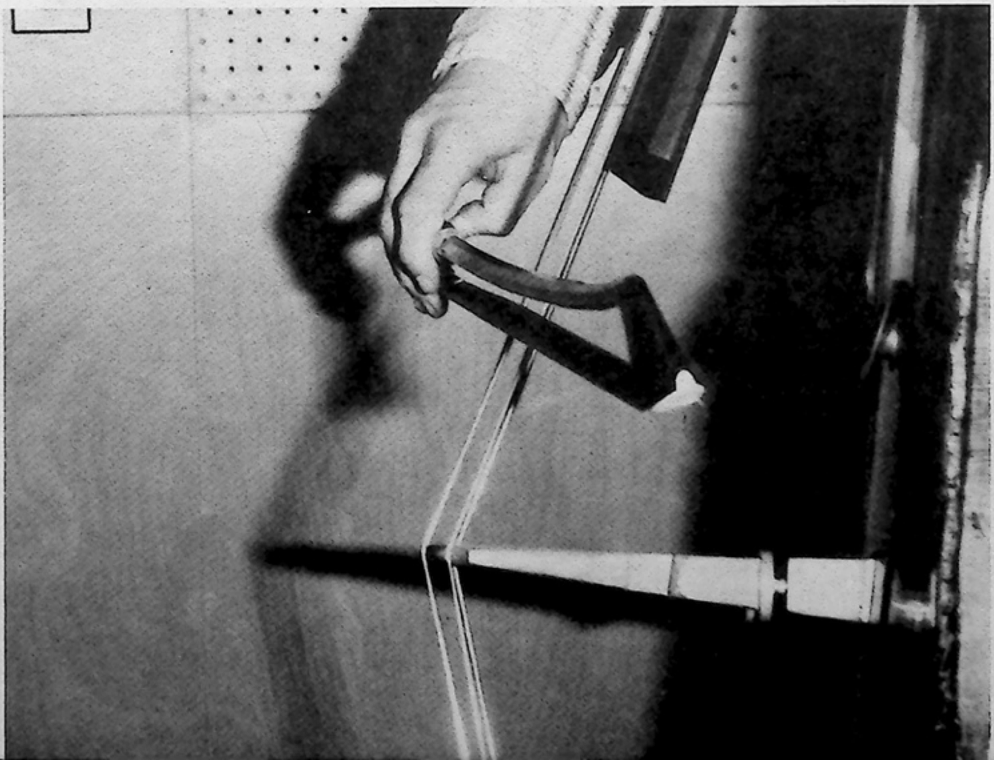


Standing position with French bow. Notice shaping of the arm, which is in an excellent position for best leverage. Straight elbow joints should never be encouraged.



An inside picture of the hand in holding the French bow. Note the compact or natural look of the hand.

Side view of the hand in holding the French bow. Note the arched or bent thumb. The straight thumb is one of the most damaging positions that can be used for the French method of bowing.



There have been instances in which the selection of a player for a position has been dependent on the biased opinion of judges who are not even bass players."

"How would you describe the differences between French and German bows?"

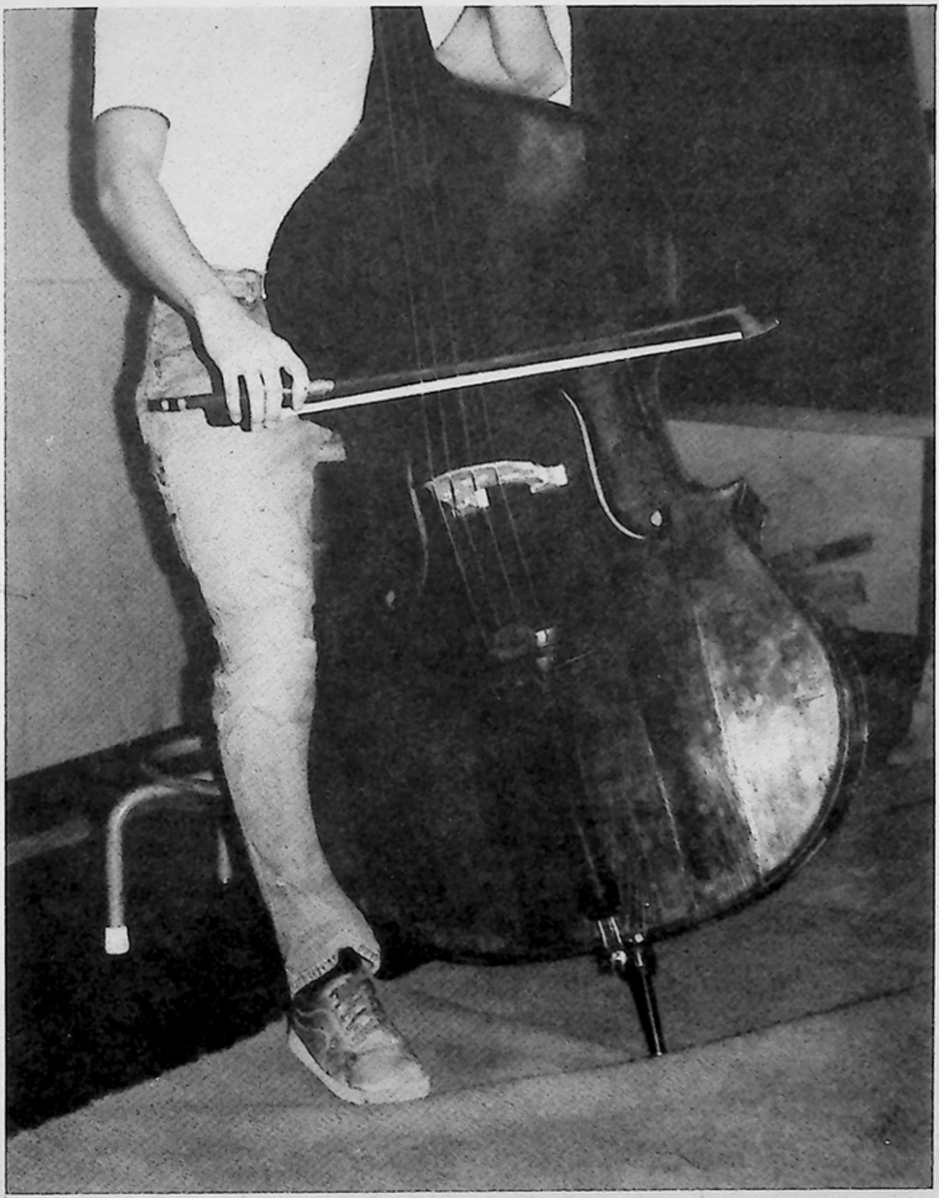
"Let us reverse the question and talk about their similarities. As unlike as the bows appear to be physically and in manipulation, they are really quite closely related in bowing motions and leverage. The major difference is in the manner in which the fingers contact the bow. There is even a similarity in finger motion on both bows. Perhaps the most significant difference is that the thumb is the most obvious finger that transmits pressure on the German bow, whereas the index finger does much of the same for the French bow. Remember, though, that both the thumb and index finger are flexible and strong. Both are necessary in manipulating a pencil, and both are essential in using either type of bow." However, I do consider that the French bow can be more easily manipulated in slurring back and forth between two adjoining strings, while one can usually acquire a good spiccato more quickly with the German bow. A well-controlled sautille is equally difficult with either bow, as are most of the other technical bow strokes.

"Can you give us an example of distinct prejudices in bow selection?"

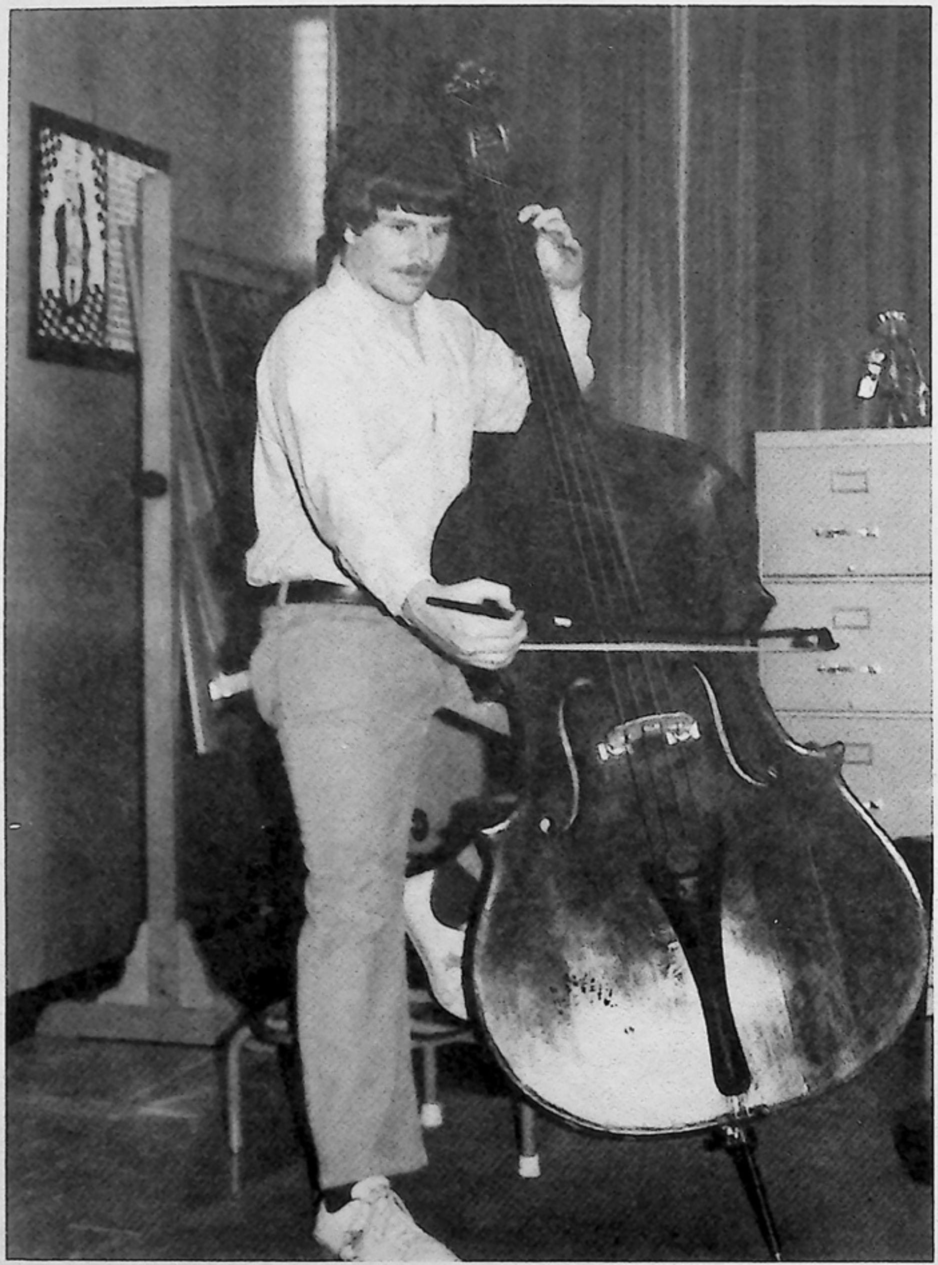
"Yes. It is my feeling that the trend toward French bows is often influenced by non-bass players in the string sections who frown upon the German bow because it does not look enough like the bow used by the rest of the string section. They evidently prefer to overlook the fact that while the French bass bow may possess certain similarities to the violin and cello bows, its requirements of physical manipulation and positioning are in many ways vastly different."

"Tell us about the various usages of the two bows."

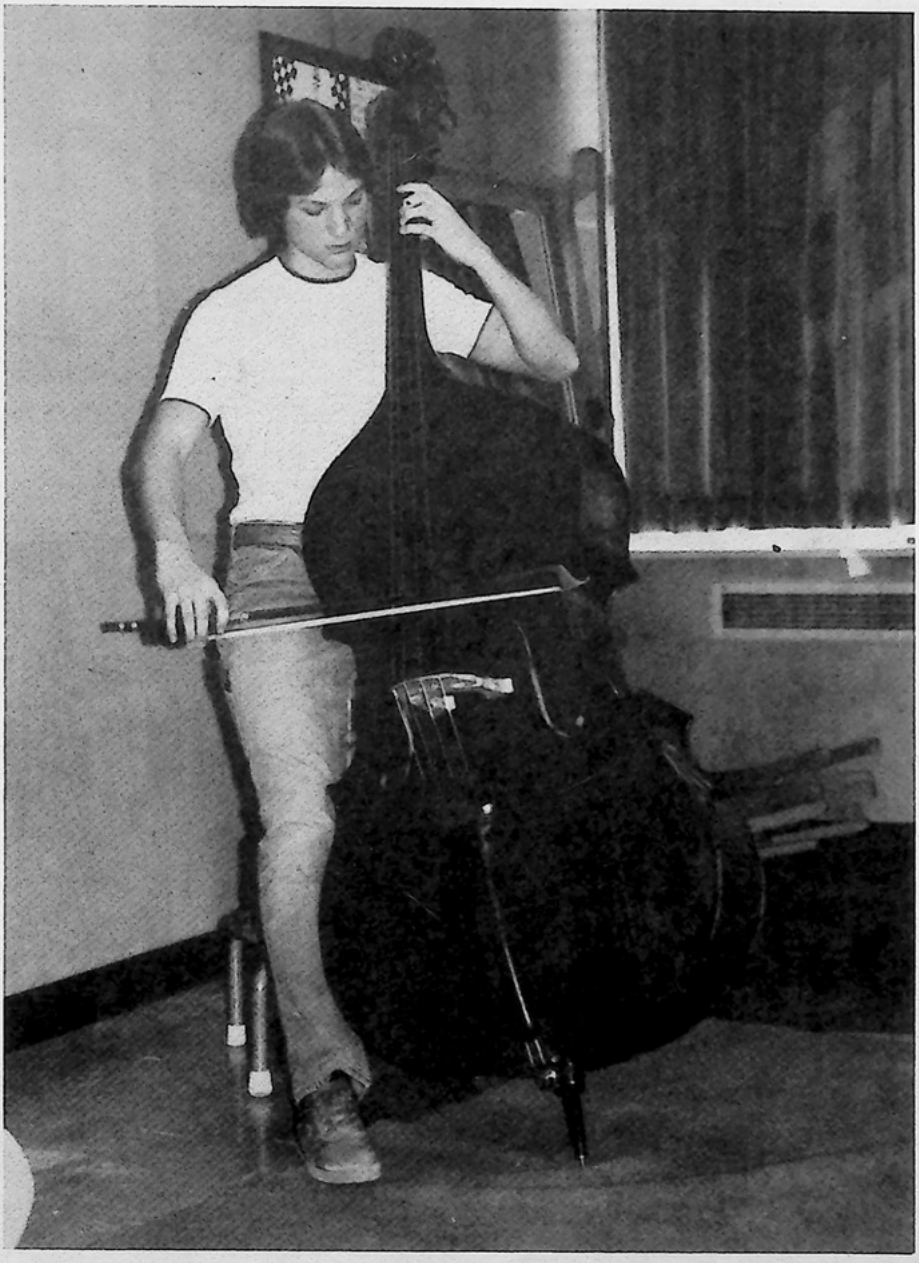
"I find that national traditions often play a decided role in bow selection. In Germany, as to be expected, nearly all double bassists play with German bow, and the Berlin Philharmonic certainly has an excellent bass section. In France, all double bassists play French bow, and the Orchestre Nationale has a fine bass section. In Vienna the situation is much the same as in Germany."



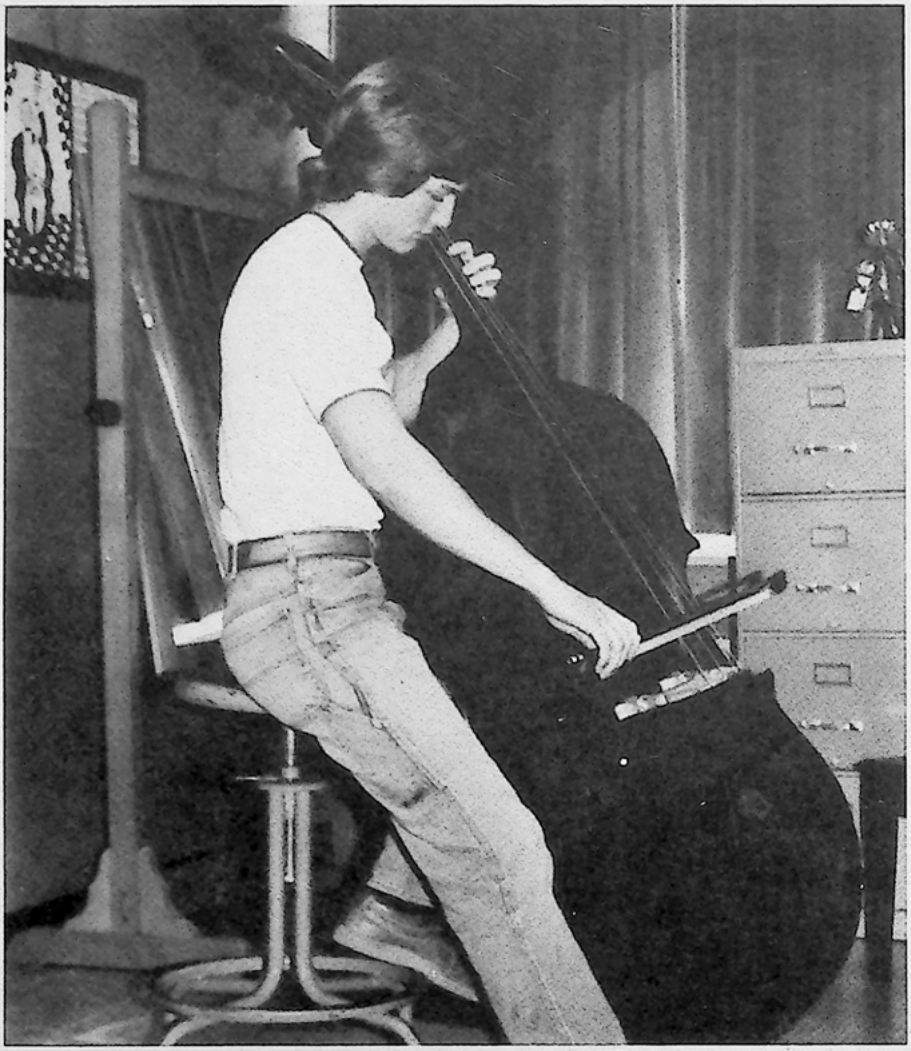
Front view of the French bow position. Note the extreme naturalness of this player's arm and hand. It is a very classic example of an excellent physical formation for both holding the bow and shaping the arm. There is a great power and control in this position. Strangely enough, this player displays both of these characteristics when using his bow.



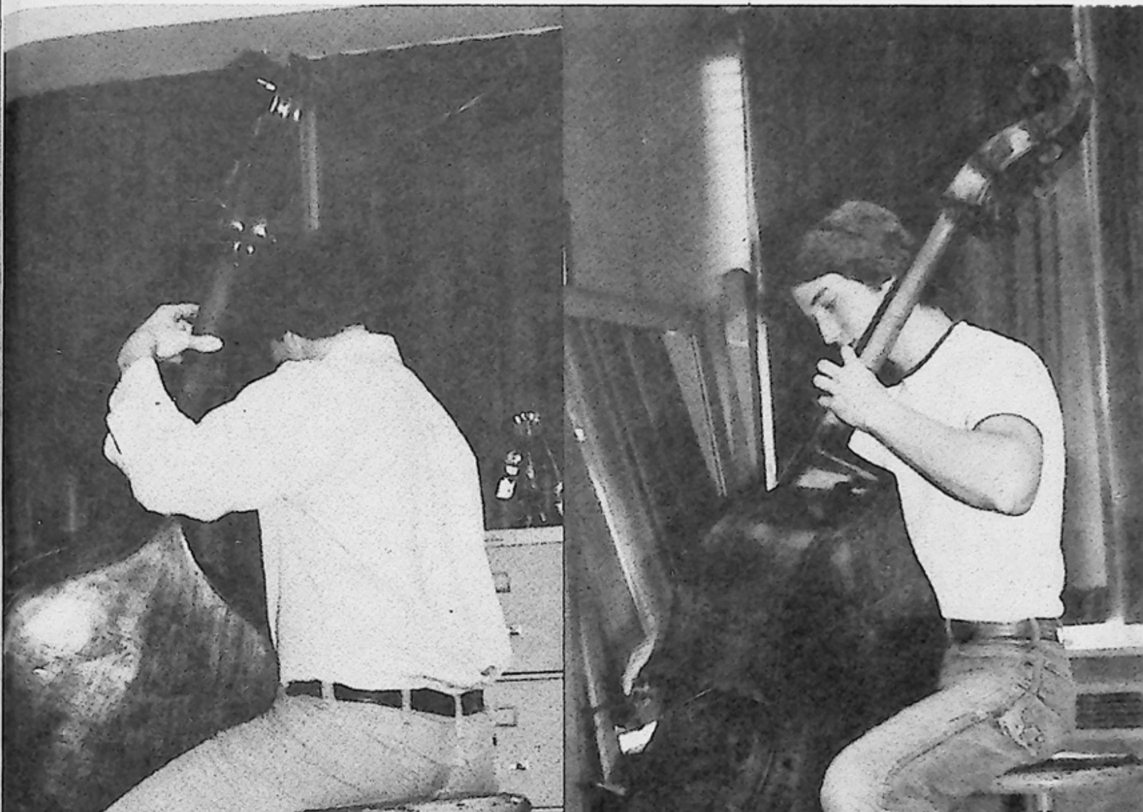
Playing seated with German bow. Note posture is both powerful looking and comfortable. His right leg looks too straight, due to a stool height that is a little too high.



This player has achieved a better position for his right leg. You will notice the extra look of comfort due to proper use of stool height. His right knee is thus bent. This player should be the least likely to suffer the occupational shoulder and back problems common to double bassists.



Further examples of seated position, back and side views. Note the solid seating, so that spine is supported. Do not allow spine to extend over seat on the right side of body. This causes an imbalance of support, enabling one side to drop, while the stool seat pushes left side up. This is bound to affect the health of spine. Also note low rungs used on these stools. They are by no means the optimum in correctly designed stools for the double bassist. However, stools without high rungs, like those found on wooden stools are purposely used at our school, to prevent cramping of leg position.



"How about the United States?"

"Well, in the Philadelphia Orchestra at this time, almost the entire bass section plays French bow, and it is an outstanding section. Other orchestras tend to vary. Gary Karr, one of the world's great double bassists, plays German bow. In Italy I heard Petracci, a fine young bassist who was perhaps equally outstanding, and he played French bow."

"What is your own personal experience and preference?"

"I have had excellent results with my students with both French and German bow in those instances where the student had innate talent and practiced correctly. Nor have I ever found any general reason for switching the individual student from one to another. I have long since come to the conclusion that both schools of bowing make a significant contribution to the art of double bass playing. If one carefully observes and truly listens to each bowing school, he will have a difficult time indeed in making what is fundamentally an unnecessary decision as to which is superior."

"Are you trying to say that the "Battle of the Bows" is simply a waste of time?"

"I will give you an answer that the late Dr. Fritz Reiner, maestro of the Chicago Symphony, gave to me. He offered me a position with his orchestra without audition, because he knew my playing as a member of the Pittsburgh Symphony from when he had been its conductor.

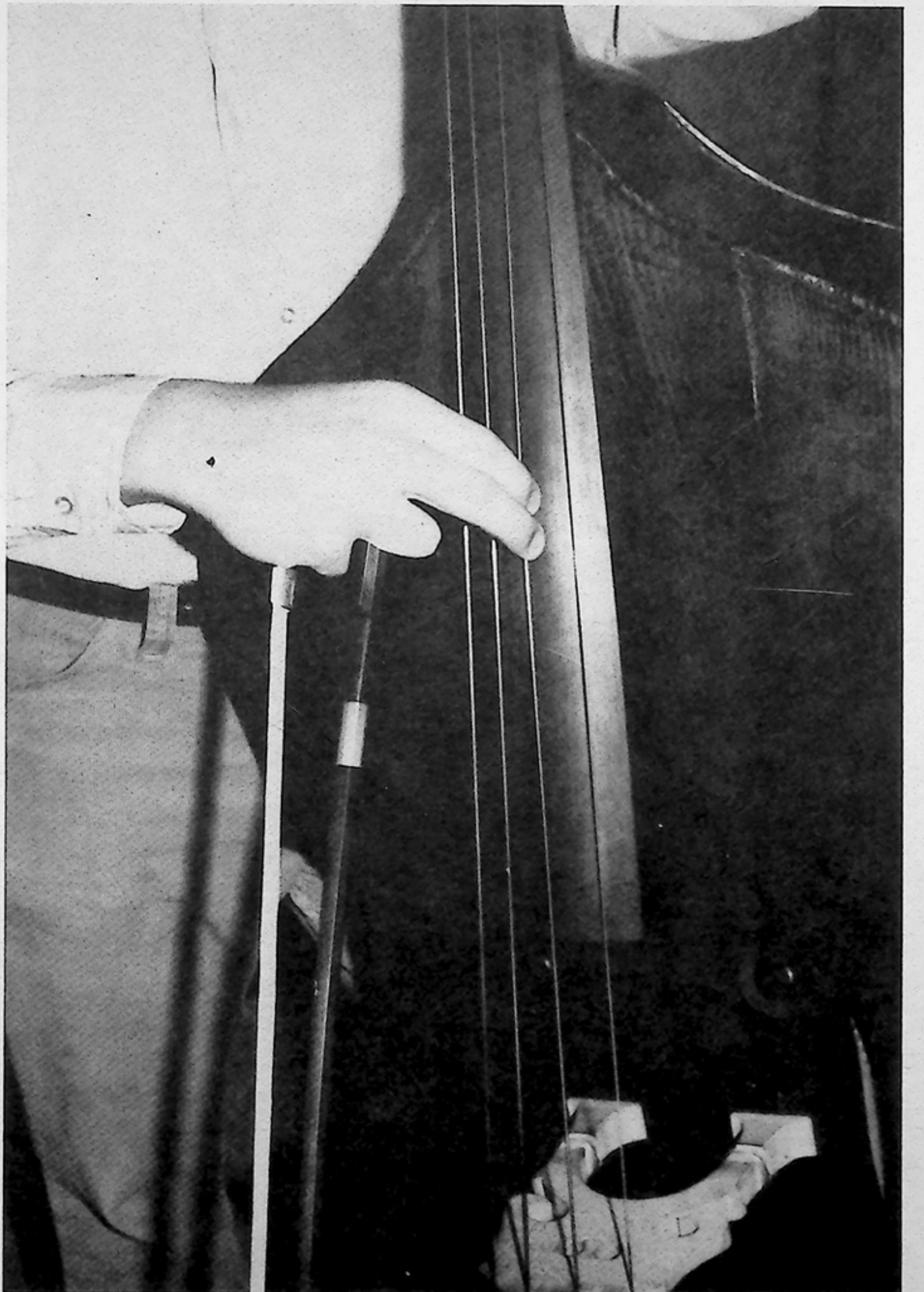
Reiner said, "By the way, I forget - do you play French or German bow?"

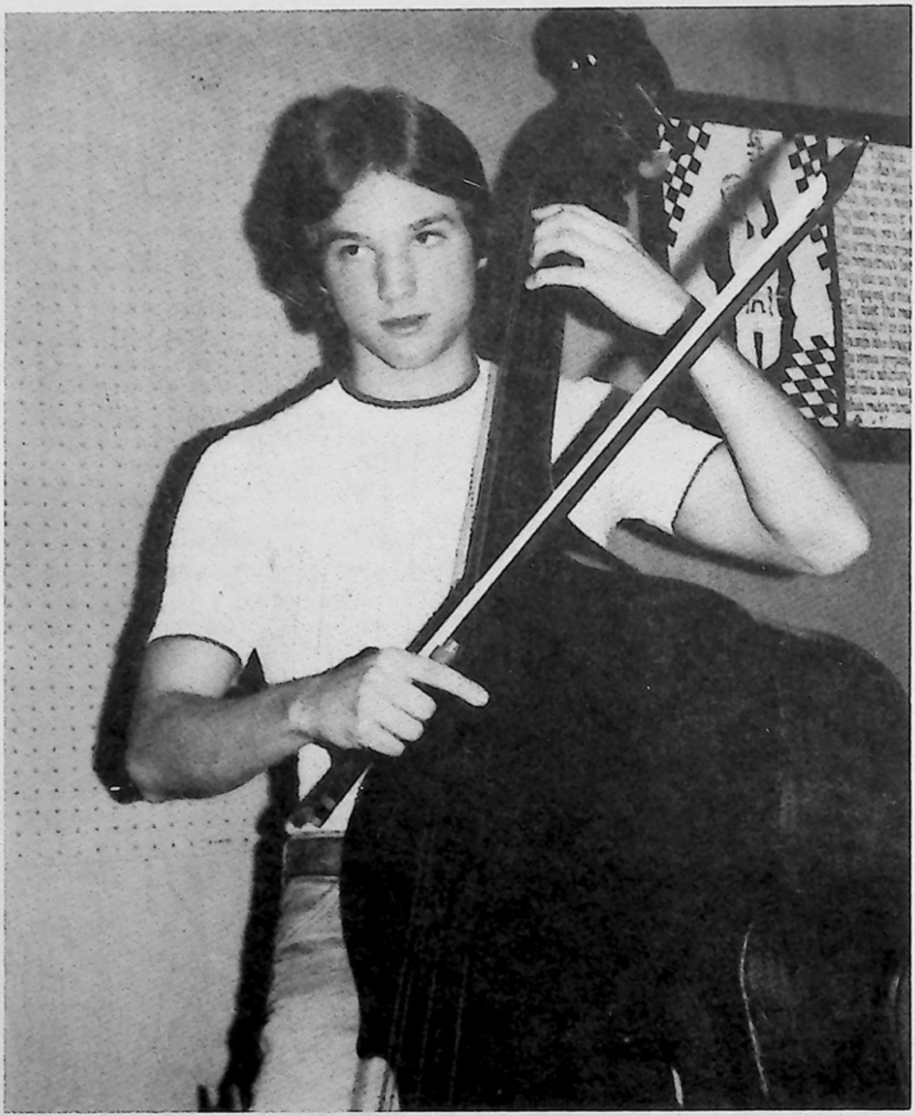
"German," I replied, wondering whether he had fallen victim to the practice of choosing 'camps.'

"Good." he said. "Now I will have a bass section of half French and half German players." A sage observation, in my opinion.

Grodner's equanimity on the question was admirable, we thought. Yet, in this matter, it would seem that even if a bassist is not unfairly prejudiced, he must inevitably make his personal choice, or use both bows as some fine bassists are now doing.

Pizzicato with German bow. Note only little finger holds bow. It is not necessary to clutch bow with this finger; merely let it hang.





Pizzicato with French bow. Most French bow players use the second finger for pizzicato, not index finger as used by this player. However, with both bows, many use the first (index) and the second finger to play rapid pizzicato passages. This is the best approach to achieving best dexterity and control for fast pizzicato passages.

Igor Oistrakh

Igor Oistrakh was born in Odessa, Russia in 1931. He began his violin study at the age of six under the tutelage of V. I. Merenbloom. Later he studied intermittently with his father, the celebrated virtuoso David Oistrakh. At age 12 he became the pupil of Pyotr Stolyarsky, who had also been a teacher of David Oistrakh and Nathan Milstein. In 1949 Igor enrolled in the Moscow Conservatory, and it was in 1949 that he played his first complete recital in Kiev. Also in the same year he became a laureate of the International Competition for violinists at the World Festival for young students in Budapest, and in 1952 he won First Prize at the International Competition for violinists (Wieniawski Competition) in Poznan. His first concert tour to Western European countries was in 1953, and the first of his many tours of the United States occurred in 1962.

Igor Oistrakh is currently an internationally renowned soloist, respected and acclaimed in every quarter of the globe, and he has continued the Oistrakh tradition of teaching, initiated by his father at the Moscow Conservatory. His recordings are prolific in number, and he has appeared in both 'live' and recorded performances in instrumental duos with his late father and as soloist under his baton.

To the Oistrakh family belongs a distinction unique in the annals of modern violinistic art- the first and only instance in which both a father and son have been elite violinists on the top international level. Looking backward in history we might cite the case of Giovanni Battista Vitali and his son Tommasi Antonio Vitali, or Leopold Mozart and his son Wolfgang. But the elder Vitali can scarcely be considered a famed performer, even in the limited violinistic realm of his time, and the genius composer Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, though reputed to have been a good violinist, certainly did not pursue a violinistic career in competition with the leading soloists of his era.

A great number of violinists, of course, were initially taught by their father or mother, and more than a few of these violinist-parents have exerted vast influence (in some cases, deleterious) and/or pressure upon the violinistic and career developments of their gifted offspring—Heifetz, Francescatti, Zukerman, to mention but a few among many. But the two-generation Oistrakh syndrome of fame is as yet unequalled.

Igor Oistrakh and his famous father, David, enjoying a game of chess. The father and son were very close. Facing page: In his later years, David Oistrakh did more and more conducting, while Igor did more and more soloist work.

We visited Igor Oistrakh at his hotel in New York City during his 1975 American tour. He was then, at 44, fully developed as a person and artist. We found him to be a most amiable person and able to express his thoughts with admirable English grammar, though with a strong Russian accent. He bears a pronounced facial and physical resemblance to his father, and his figure already hints at corpulence.

He speaks of his father with reverence, in contrast to so many musical parent-children relationships which have bred resentment, ill-will and even hatred. There can be no doubt that the Oistrakh father-son association was exceptional in its felicity. We proceeded to question him.

Said Igor, "I started the violin when I was six, though even before that I had played the piano. I was doing well with the piano but had a tremendous innate love for the violin. Later I realized that my fancy for the violin was closely related to the powerful image of my father. But I didn't do too well at first with the violin. I was very lazy—didn't want to practice, so they sent me back to the piano. I decided that I enjoyed it even more than the violin. It was so easy to get to. You only had to walk over to it."

"Was your father your first violin teacher?"

"No. My teacher for the first two years was Valeria Ivanov Merenbloom (he carefully spelled out each letter of the name separately). After that my father taught me for a while, then again insisted that I go back to the piano, feeling I would do better. But when I continued to show progress on the violin I was able to persuade him to let me study the violin seriously.

"When I was 12, I was sent to study with Pyotr Stolyarsky, who had been my father's teacher, and I worked with him for ten years. He instilled in me a great love and enthusiasm for the violin. Whenever I left one of his lessons I was motivated to practice many hours a day. Of course, when my father would return from his many concert tours he was also a tremendous source of help and inspiration to me."

Sam Applebaum admiring Igor Oistrakh's violin. Looking on is Paul Paradise. All agree that there is no substitute for a fine Cremonese violin.

"Were you at all inspired by any Western violinists?"

"Yes, very much by Georges Enesco and also by Yehudi Menuhin, who was in our country in 1945."

"Tell us some more about your youthful years of development."

Igor Oistrakh's young son with his pet dog.

"Well—when I was 14 an interesting thing happened. At that time, a fugue for nine violins had been written by Dubinsky, and the second violinist became ill. I was asked to substitute and I had only a day and a half to learn it from memory. I really worked very hard and surprised everyone by succeeding in the task.

"I think that for the actual building of technique, the years from14 to 18 are perhaps the most important. During those years one should have mastered, or be well along the way to mastering, all phases of violin technique. I myself developed rapidly during those four crucial years. In fact, at 18 I won the Budapest contest.

"What about practicing?"

"I was very fortunate in that respect. I had teaching assistants as well as my professor to guide my practice. Then when my father was home, he would shout out suggestions from every room in the house as I practiced, even when he was shaving."

"Could you tell us some of the things you studied?"

"Yes. I worked on the usual technical material. But I was always eager to work on those things that were beyond my im-

I had the advantage in that when my father was home, he would make suggestions for my practicing. Actually, I had supervised practicing most of my life, and this is an invaluable advantage.

mediate powers, and I certainly recommend that pupils who already possess a good basic technique work on things that are more difficult. I do not approve of the idea that a pupil stay within the bounds of his technical capacity for too long. Of course I am not speaking of public performance! One should never perform in public any work that is either technically or musically beyond his grasp."

"But what were the actual works you chose to study during your 14 to 18 year old period?"

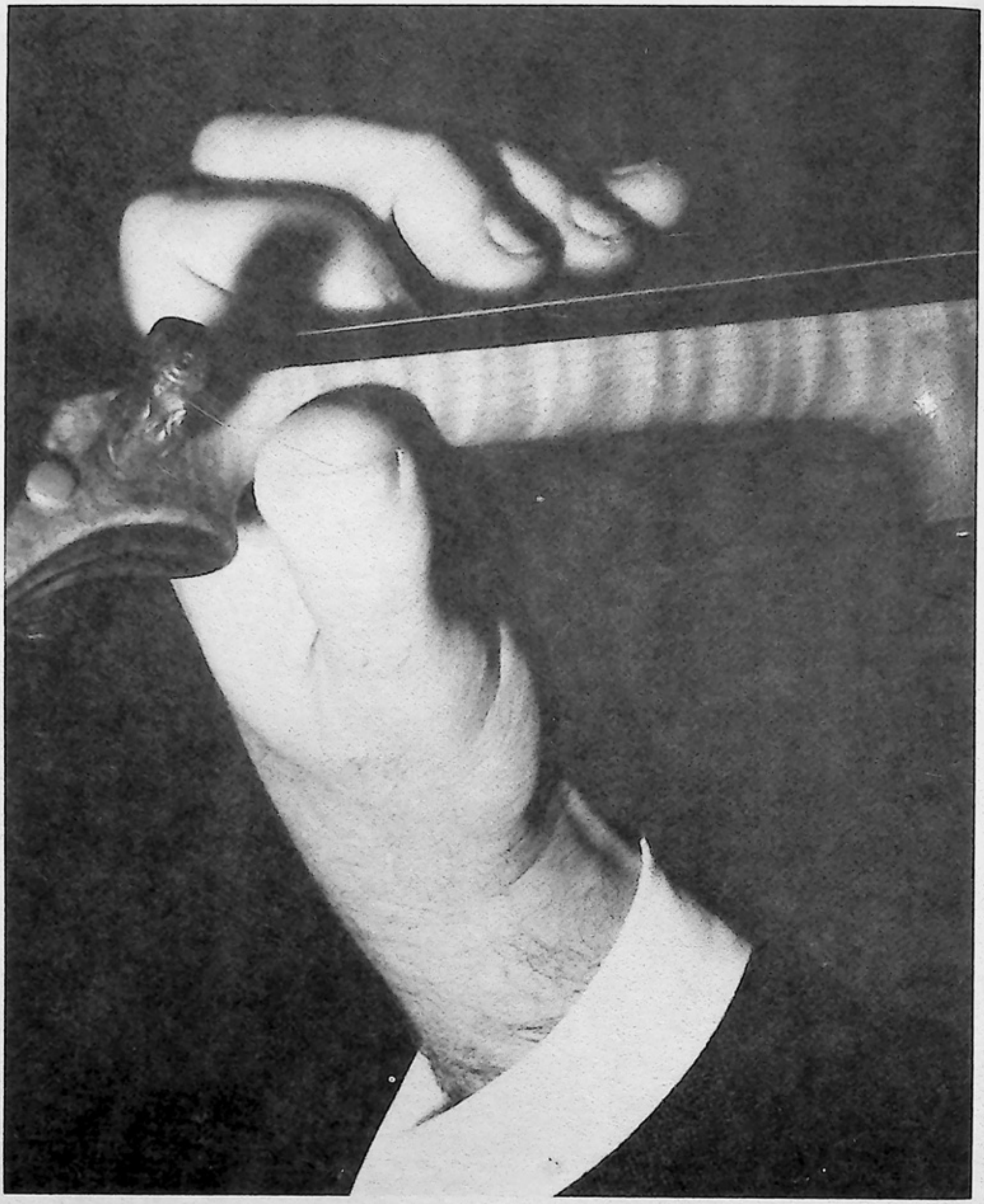
"Well, as I said, some of the things were a bit beyond me at the time, but I worked on the Etudes of Ernst, Wieniawski and Sauret, and especially on the entire Scale System of Karl Flesch. Yes," he

I do not approve of the idea that a pupil should stay within the bounds of his technical capacity for too long. They should constantly try to play things more and more difficult, so they can learn the extent of their ability.

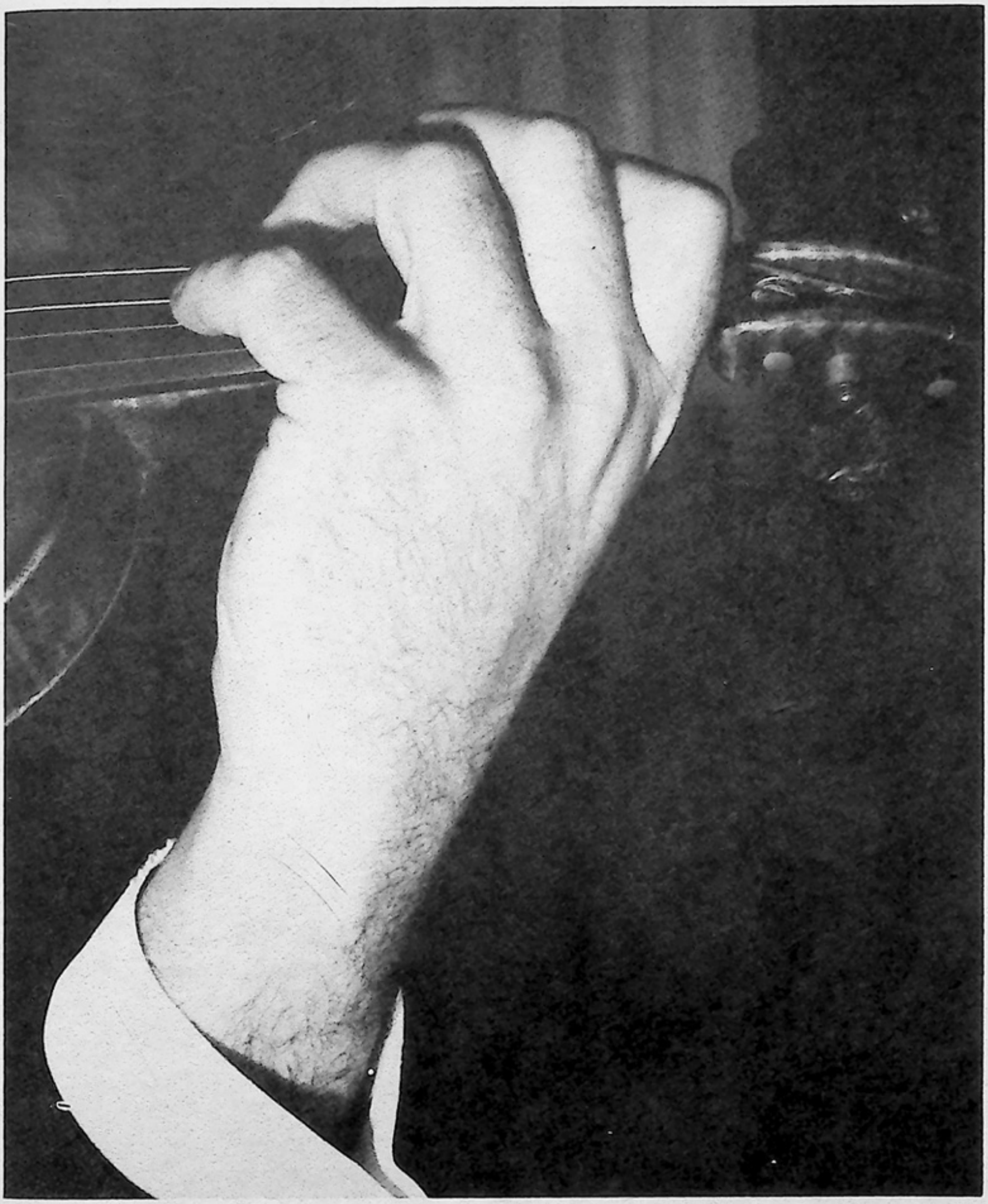
A student should have attained all of the technical facility he needs by the time he is sixteen, or certainly by the time he is eighteen. If he has not attained that proficiency, it will hold him back the rest of his life from being a violinist of soloist caliber.

murmured somewhat nostagically, "I worked very, very hard. Luckily I was able to learn from and absorb the vast experience and wisdom from the brilliant musicians with whom I was constantly surrounded. Whenever I heard a great violinist I immediately went home and worked harder than ever.

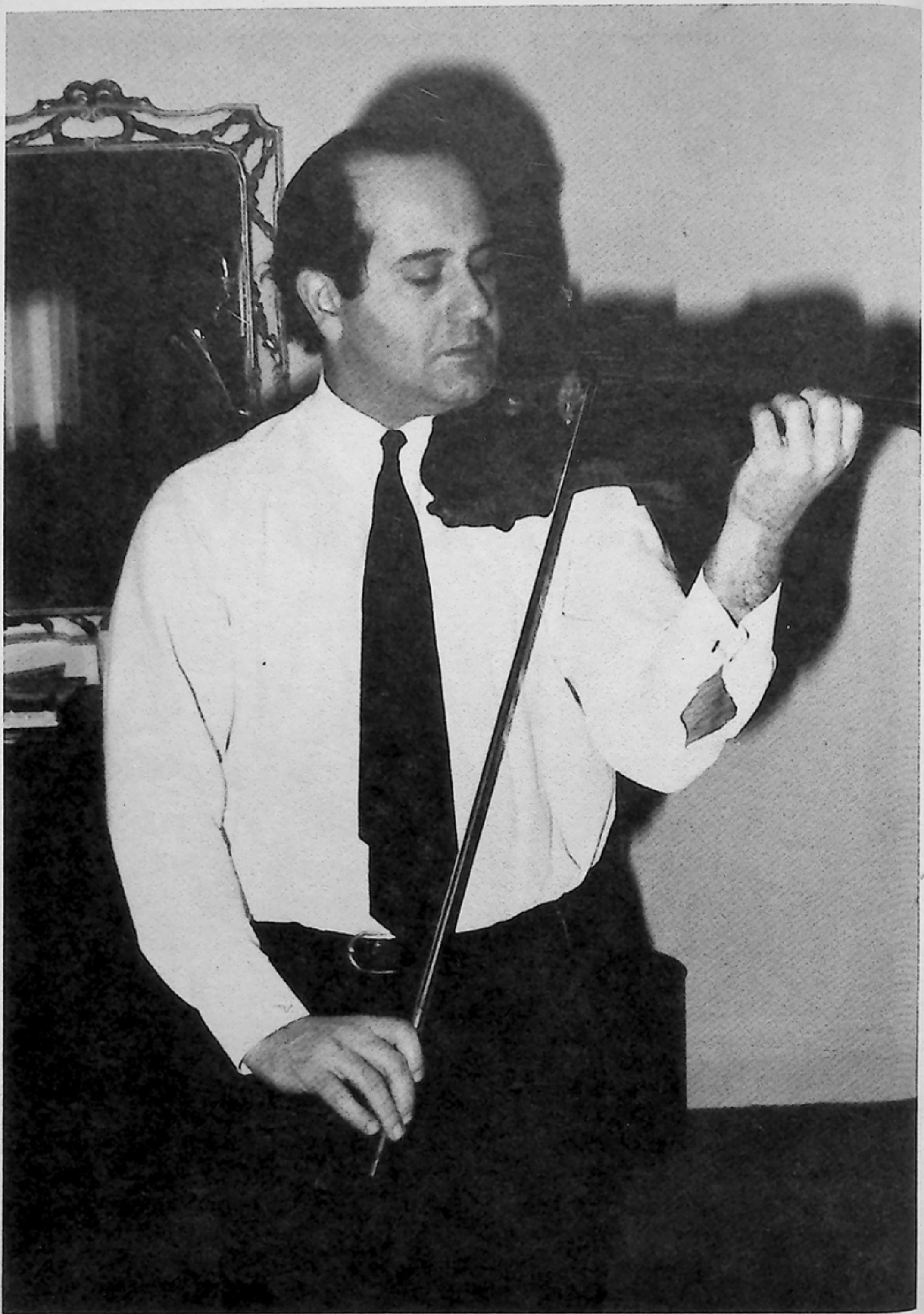
"I remember benefitting very much from the Paganini Caprices and the Vieuxtemps First and Glazunov Concertos, though they were beyond me at the time. I loved them and sweated many hours on each individual passage. My father, of course, would carefully check my progress every time he returned from tour. He was a very strict disciplinarian and was particularly insistent that I produce a beautiful tone."



The position of Igor Oistrakh's hand in the first position.



A side, top view of the same position as on the facing page.



"Can you recall any anecdotes concerning your father during this period?"

"Let me see," mused Igor. "Yes, I recall one. You see—every time he returned home from a tour he would bring me a little present. This time I asked that he not give me anything, but instead listen to me play the *Concerto Militaire* by Karl Lipinski.

"Impossible," said my father. "You are not yet able to play that concerto. Why do you do things like that? No, you must accept your present."

"I cried and pleaded with him. Finally he consented to hear me. I remember how I poured my entire heart and soul into that performance. I cannot recall another time when merely playing the violin meant so much to me. I knew my father was sitting there listening, and I was wholly engrossed. It was an unforgettable emotional experience for me.

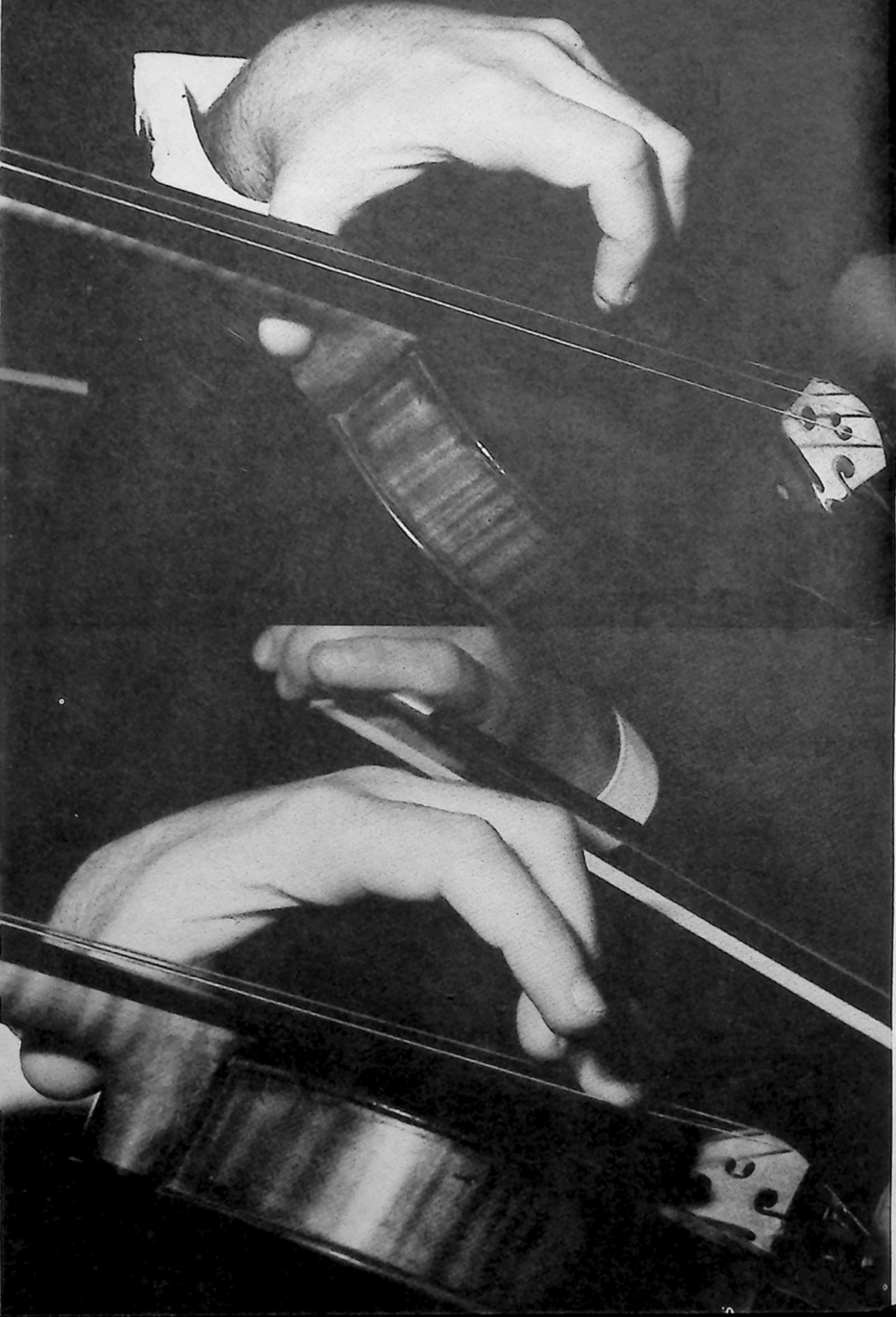
"Afterward my father was pleased, and it was the greatest gift I ever received. Later I made my recording debut playing the Bach Double Concerto with my father and I remember how thrilled I was. He had a tremendous tone which he produced with the greatest of ease, and as to be expected, he overshadowed me. But nevertheless that is a good recording and I am proud of it. I consider it the musical turning point in my life.

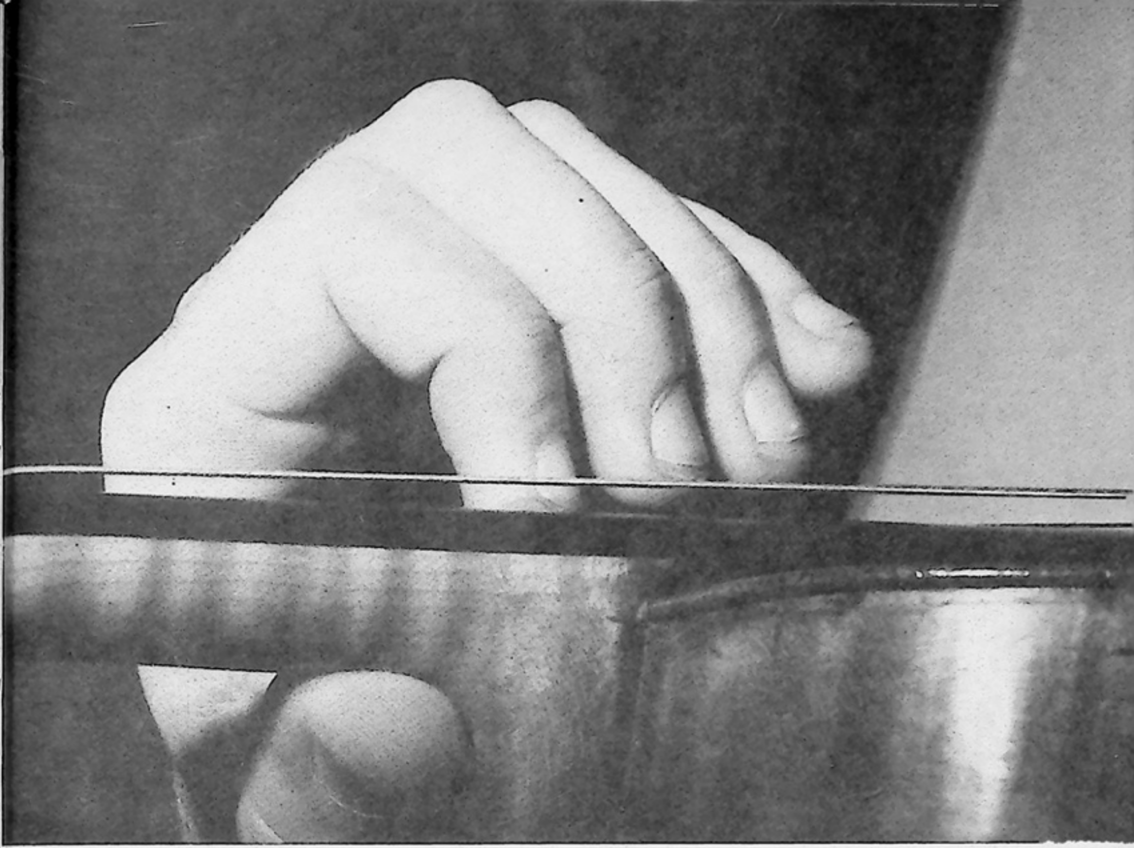
"In 1949 when I was 18, I graduated from the Central School and was then able to work with my father more regularly. When I won the Wieniawski Competition I played the Bach A-minor solo Partita, the Wieniawski Concerto No. 2 and *The Fountain of Arethusa* by Szymanowski, among other things."

"Can you recall what you played at your first recital?"

"Yes. My first complete recital was in January, 1949. The main works on the program were Mozart's Concerto No. 5, which I played with piano accompaniment, the Bach G-minor Solo Sonata and Wieniawski's *Faust Fantasy.*"

Note the position of Igor Oistrakh's right hand when he plays at the tip of the bow. His hand is parallel to the floor, and the fourth finger is off the bow. Maestro Oistrakh uses the classical style of holding the violin, though he uses a neck-shoulder support.





Various positions of the Igor Oistrakh hand on the violin during an actual performance.

"What did you perform on your first foreign tour?"

"On my first trip to the Western countries in 1953 I played, with orchestra, the First and Second Concertos of Prokofiev, the Tchaikovsky and Glazunov Concertos and the Concert Suite of Taniev."

"What were some other highlights during your youthful musical development?"

"Among the most fruitful and exciting experiences of my musical life were those times that such composers as Shostakovich, Khatchaturian and Kabelevsky came to our home. Each would bring his concerto for my father to see, and often the compositions were not yet finished. They would play the score on the piano while my father listened and watched the violin part. He would play as much of the violin lines as possible from the hand-written manuscript. It was wonderful to hear these works in embryonic form and see them mature, and afterwards, to see them in print and play them. And it was immensely stimulating to hear the discussions that went on between these composers and my father."

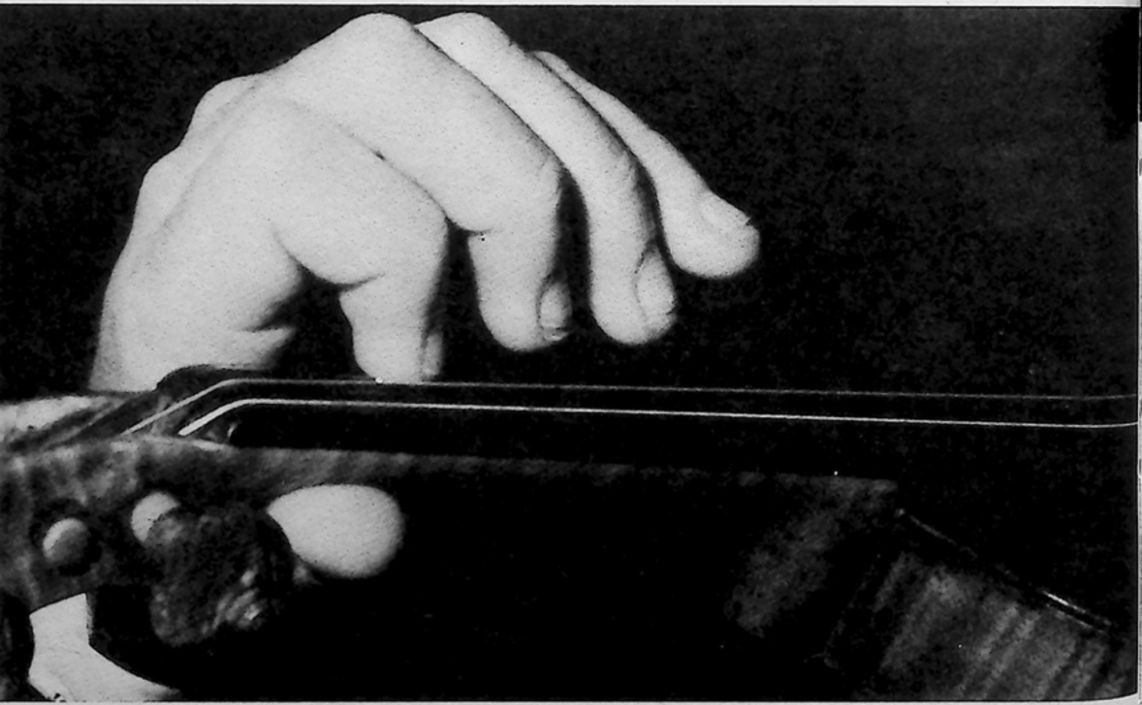
"Could you tell us some of your ideas about the Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto?"

"Well, in general I prefer that it be played in the traditional manner."

"What do you mean by that?"

"I mean, for instance, that I strongly object to hearing it played too rapidly, as is so often done these days—especially the first movement. The tradition, as I understand it, demands a more relaxed, even tranquil approach. Many students tend to increase their speed in the development of the first movement. I feel that the development should remain in the same tempo. Even the 32nd notes should be in exact time. Of course, in the coda the tempo must be faster."

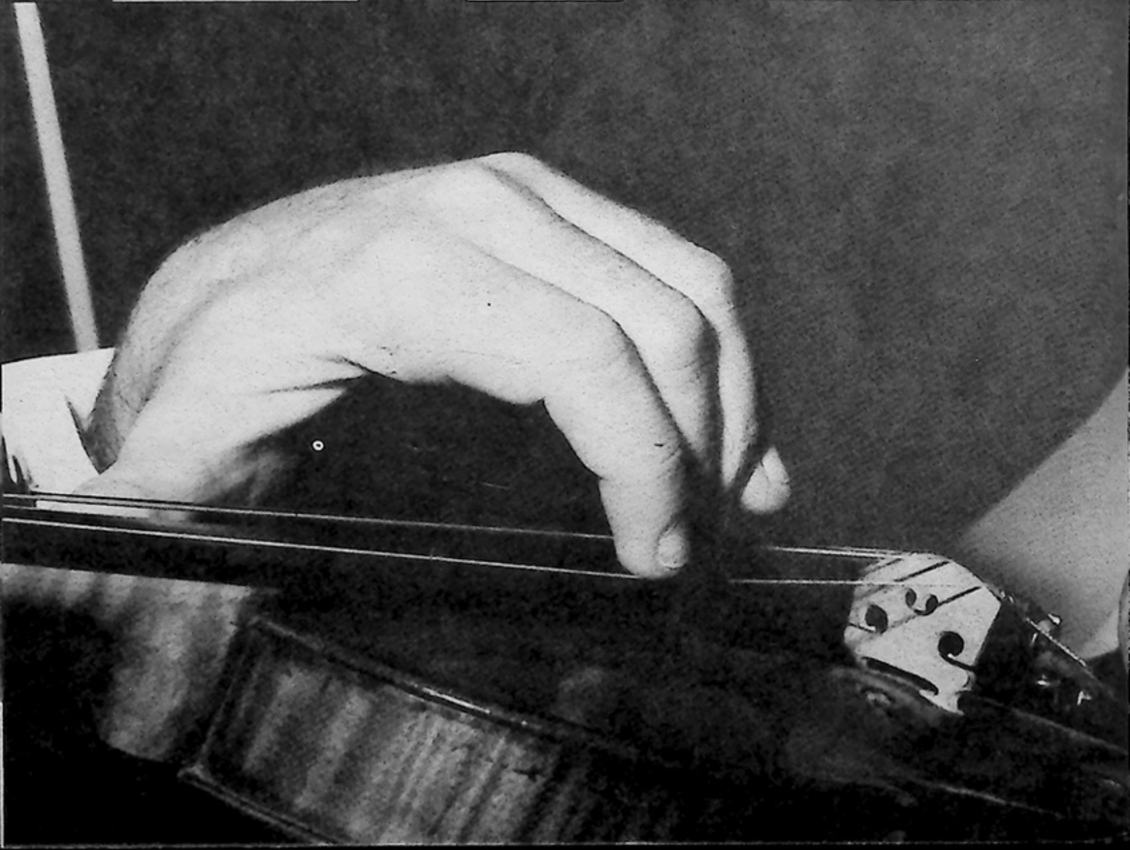
Getting ready to trill in the first position. Note the position of the thumb and the perpendicular aspect of the first finger.

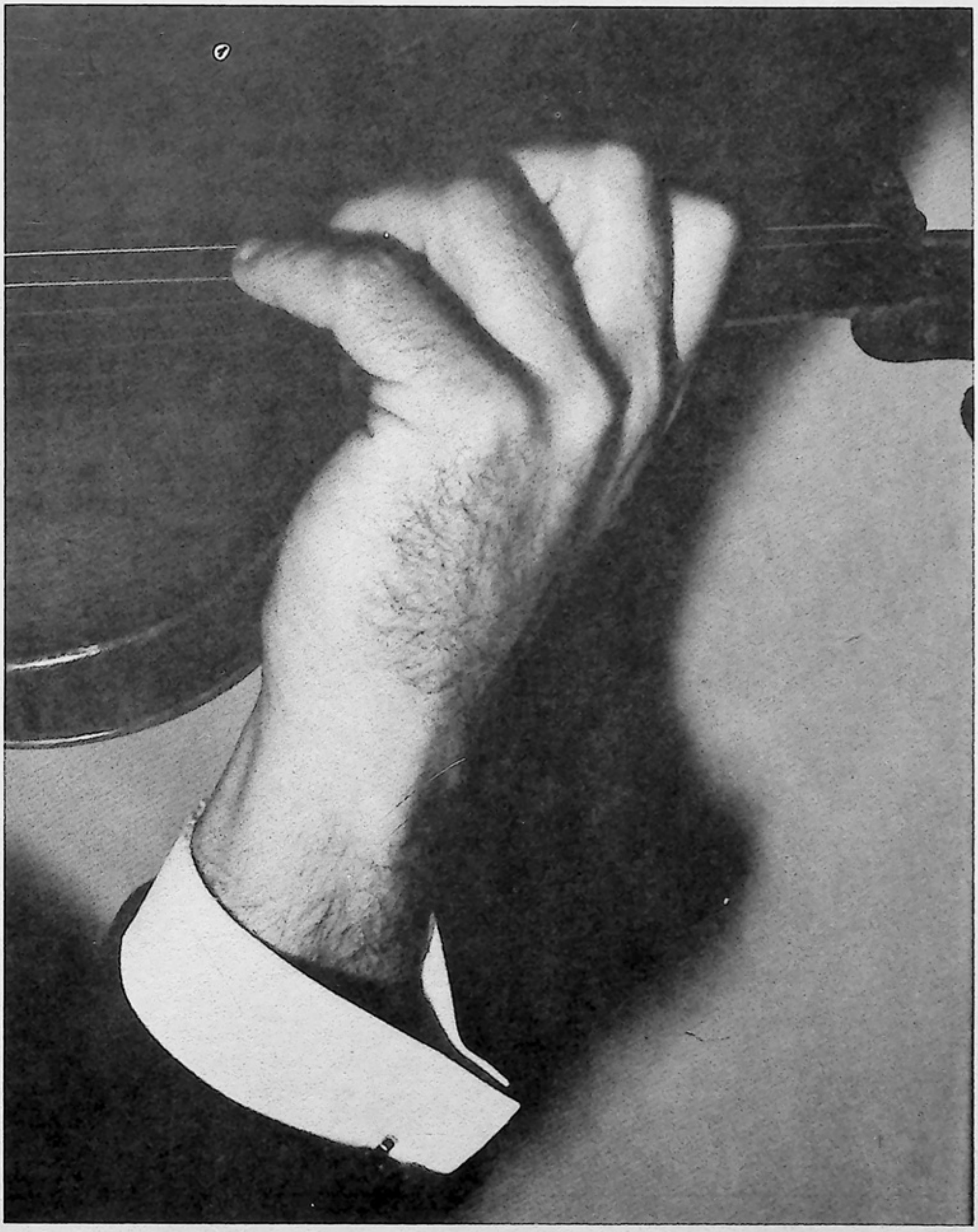


Igor Oistrakh tunes his violin using very little bow, and plays very softly.

"What about the second movement?"

"Oddly enough, in the Canzonetta we have an opposite trend. This is now often played much too slowly, with too much emotion. Our concept, as handed down by Tchaikovsky himself—and my father agreed with this—was that the Canzonetta should be played simply and sincerely, without undue emotionalism. There should be practically no ritards, except perhaps when the main theme appears for the last time. But the finale, I think, should be very fast in pace—preferably with the feeling of one beat to the bar. In fact, it is better if the second beat is not accented at all. The whole thing, except for the few lyrical passages, should be a gallop—very joyous, bright, exuberant. The rapid speed must be sustained or else the innate pulse of the music is upset."





Above and on the facing page are action photographs showing Igor Oistrakh actually performing parts of the Paganini "Violin Concerto No. 1."

"Have you done any teaching yourself?"

"Yes, I was teaching assistant to my father for 17 years, but when my concert schedule became more and more extensive and the demands of my solo career took all my time and energy, I was forced to stop teaching. Later, I once again resumed teaching."

"Do you have any desire to engage in conducting as your father did?"

"Yes, I started back in 1968. I conducted several of the Haydn Symphonies, a Brahms Symphony and some excerpts by Wagner."

At this writing, Igor Oistrakh stands high in contention among those world-renowned violinists who are currently concertizing. His large repertoire, incorporating widely diverse musical styles, includes, for example, such nostalgic romantic dazzlers as the Viextemps *Tarentelle* and the Ysaye *Lointaine-passé*, along with the Beethoven Violin-Piano Sonata masterworks, the capricious Stravinsky *Suite Italienne* and the modern finger-twisting complexities of Hindemith's *Kammermusik No. 4.*

Thus far he has made recordings of more than 80 different opuses (great and small, some more than once), and this does not include a sizeable list of duos recorded with his father.

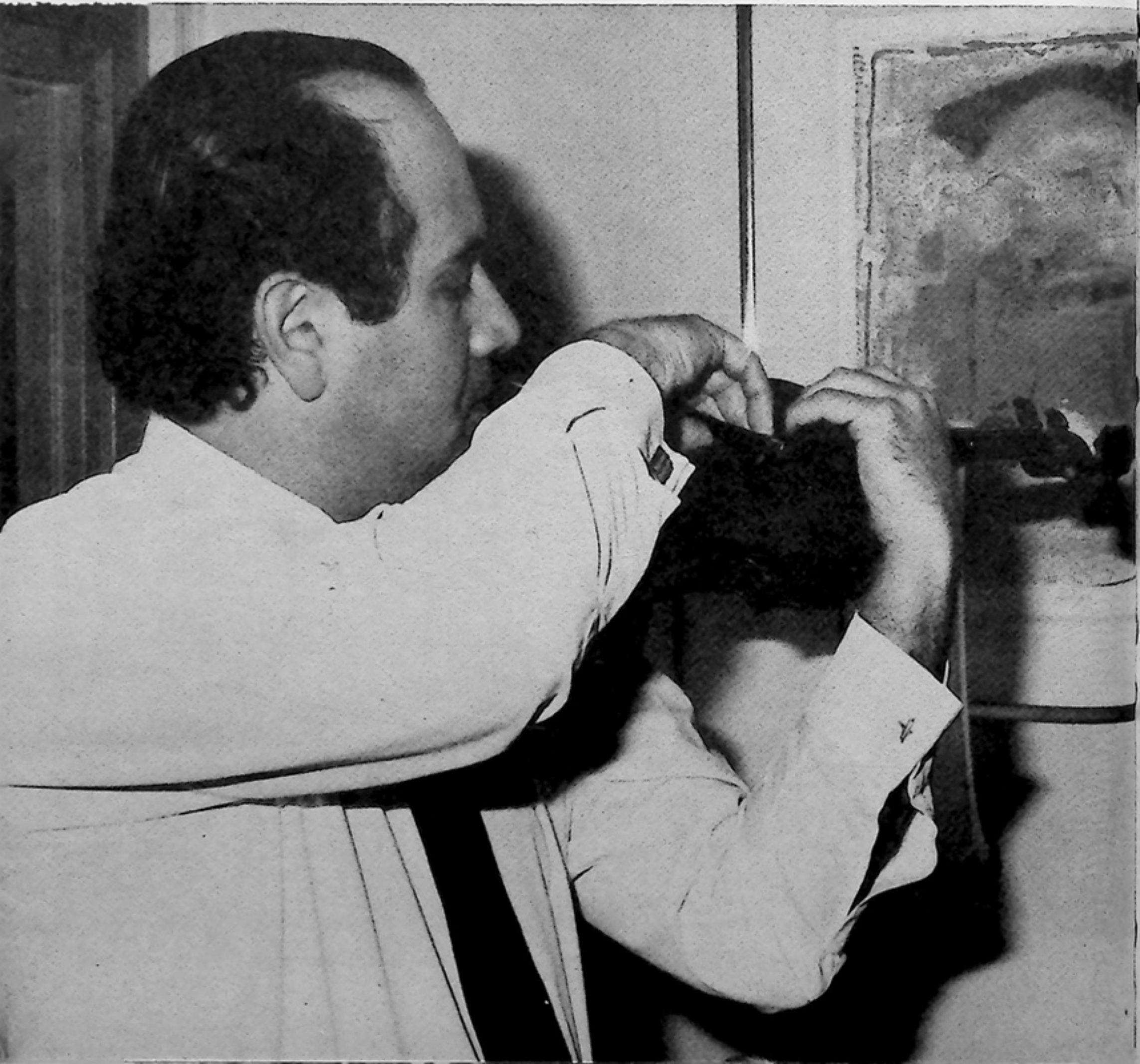
Though the younger Oistrakh doubtlessly profited enormously from the presence, example and direct assistance of his father, it is necessary, in discussing his art, to appreciate the negative effects of this singular musical liaison.

When we evaluate one of the many excellent violinists below top international soloist ranking, we might prefer to emphasize such accomplishments as instrumental mastery and perspicacity of musicianship alone. But as we come closer to the violinistic summit, another vital element becomes paramount—the individuality of sound and style (i.e. musical personality) of the violinist-artist—those exclusive qualities that separate the very greatest violinists from any and all of their colleagues. If association with his mighty father lent wings to Igor's progress on the levels of instrumentalism and musicianship, how did it affect his violinisitic personality?

Igor Oistrakh with Dr. Herbert Axelrod.

How could it be possible, for instance, for a young violinist to be continually and intimately exposed to such super-individualist violinistic personalities as Kreisler or Heifetz and not be unduly influenced by the musical and stylistic idiosyncrasies of the master? And whether one considers David Oistrakh's stylistic individuality to be as characteristic as that of Kreisler or Heifetz, or perhaps a bit less so, it can scarcely be denied that Oistrakh *père* was an exceedingly powerful "Personality of the Violin."

Of course, it would be impossible for Igor Oistrakh to refute the fact that his father was a supreme influence on his playing and his interpretation. On the facing page, Oistrakh, the elder, conducts the orchestra while Igor is soloist.



In listening to Igor Oistrakh, it is hardly possible not to note a marked similarity to David in *concept of tone production, interpretative approach, usage of vibrato, phrasing and the important violinistic expressive devices of position changes and slides.* In fact there are passages in which even an experienced ear can have difficulty telling them apart, particularly in his earlier recordings. Naturally it is a prodigious feat in itself to make music that closely resembles so formidable an artist as David Oistrakh. But this achievement has nothing whatsoever to do with playing in an individual, personal manner. No one can ever know whether Igor would have developed a different, more individualistic manner of playing had he not been so close within his father's musical orbit. But as it is, *even in his most individual phrasings, the knowledgeable listener can readily note his decided musical affinity to his father.* However, in all fairness, it must be pointed out that David Oistrakh has directly influenced the sound and style of many fine violinists, especially in the Soviet Union (and some in the West, as well), and they were not nearly so much within his periphery as his son.

Another factor which certainly must have been difficult for Igor to live with consistently was the predicament of being 'the other Oistrakh'—of existing in his father's giant shadow well into his 40's. No matter how strong the bond between the two, this could hardly have failed to exert some adverse psychological consequences upon the younger man. Only Igor Oistrakh can know the effect of this delicate situation upon his life and career, though if he chooses to remain forever silent on the subject, it is understandable.

The following abridgement of an Igor Oistrakh review presents a frank, rounded positive-negative appraisal of his playing:

"The handsome son of 'the great David' has many superb attributes—a left hand that is marvelously facile and nearly infallible, a powerful, supple bow arm, a sonorous tone (larger and more intense than some of his recordings indicate), considerable expressive temperament, abundant physical drive, and a nobility of style generally reminiscent of his father, but not at all in slavish imitation. On the debit side—he indulges in a practice common, in varying degrees, to several of the leading Soviet string players (and

"Yes, my father did take a great interest in conducting. But so do I! Back in 1968, I conducted several of the Haydn Symphonies, Brahms' Symphony, and some works by Wagner."

"Nobody that I have heard plays the First Paganini "Violin Concerto" the way thay I play it. Though I will talk about the Tchaikovsky "Violin Concerto" now, I want to give you my music of the Paganini 'Concerto,' so you can see how different my approach is to that of most other people."

some non-Russians, too), of alternating 'dead white' tones with lush, vibrant ones, thus stressing two extremes with insufficient 'middle' for contrast. This device may have its usages, but as 'a violinistic way of life', can be distracting and even annoying to the listener. Nor is Mr. Oistrakh fully immune to the temptation of resorting to 'racehorse' heroics for the display of his tremendous agility—to the detriment of his overall musical message. This is particularly unfortunate, since so often his musicianship and discipline are of the highest order. (This 1965 critique referred to an appearance with Zubin Mehta and the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra; Oistrakh's vehicles were Prokofiev's *Violin Concerto No. 1 in D-major* and the Saint-Saens *Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso.* The 'racehorse' appellation specifically applied to the latter work).

Another review, this time from 1975, states:

"Young Oistrakh is certainly a splendid virtuoso, and sturdily disciplined in what has come to be called 'the Soviet School.' It is an interesting, different conception of violin art that has transcended the borders of its place of origin. Yet, to one reared in the environment of Kreisler, Elman, Heifetz, the young Menuhin, et al, it possesses elements that are somewhat old-fashioned. Chief among them is the habit of oscillating between vibrant and nonvibrant tones in a single phrase and to no aural or interpretative end, a habit which noticeably interferes with the melodic flow. David Oistrakh could do this convincingly because it was a natural extension of his unique violinistic personality. But with Igor Oistrakh and those other Russian string players who employ this usage to greater or lesser degree, the effect is 'mannered' and, to many Western listeners, irksome. Mr. Oistrakh played with much dash, vigor and voluminous tone, though occasionally some minor string intonation and string pitch problems intruded. (This concert featured the Shostakovich Violin Concerto No. 1, also with Mehta and the Los Angeles Philharmonic).

The roster of Igor Oistrakh recordings is far too lengthy to survey in toto, but we can examine a representative selection of different musical genres.

His Tchaikovsky Concerto discing stands among the very finest of the more than 70 recorded versions of this work. The interpretation is lyric-oriented, has much sentiment and inner feel-

I remember benefiting very much from the Paganini "Caprices" and the Vieuxtemps' "First Violin Concerto." The Glazunov also helped me, though I played them all at such an early age, I was not able to play them properly. However, the constant striving to play music "over my head" enabled me to progress much more rapidly, I feel.

ing, and sustains tension with a minimum of 'hot-and-cold' vibrato fluctuations. The first movement cadenza and final movement are brilliant technical escapades, while the Canzonetta, though less transcendental than David's (and which other violinist can quite evoke the magic of David in the opening phrase?), is songfully beautiful. A superlative component of this performance is the dazzling accompaniment by David Oistrakh conducting the Moscow Philharmonic. (Melodiya-Angel).

Another exceptional disc performance is that of Saint-Saens' *Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso,* in which the 'Intro' is both liltingly graceful and glowing in sound, while the 'Rondo' is buoyantly elegant and stylish and the pacing sagacious (unlike that of the 'live' performance previously mentioned in the review). On the same disc is Chausson's *Poème,* fiery, yet narrative in approach. The playing projects many meaningful expressive phrases, occasional 'hot-and-cold' vibrato usage, a bit of overtense sound about midway, and subsequent rhetoric that more closely approximates the romantic than the reflective. The Ravel *Tzigane* excludes much vibrant sustained intensity, though it at times lacks a spirit of gypsy abandon (the thematic octaves are dullish in sound and the pizzicato section is less than immaculate). However, the Saint-Saens *Havanaise* is the single patently below-par performance of the disc in an interpretation that for all its brilliant technical passages is badly sabotaged in the opening theme by 'on-and-off' vibrato and lacks the sultry, sinuous mellifluence demanded by the essence of the music. The swift détaché section is admirable; the sound, in its best moments, is sweet rather than overtly sensual; the staccatos and trills are satisfactory, and there are quite a few arch one-finger backward slides, à la David. The Moscow Radio Orchestra, deftly conducted by Gennady Rozhdestvensky, is efficient, but not of top level in instrumental sound. ("French Music for Violin And Orchestra," Melodiya-Angel).

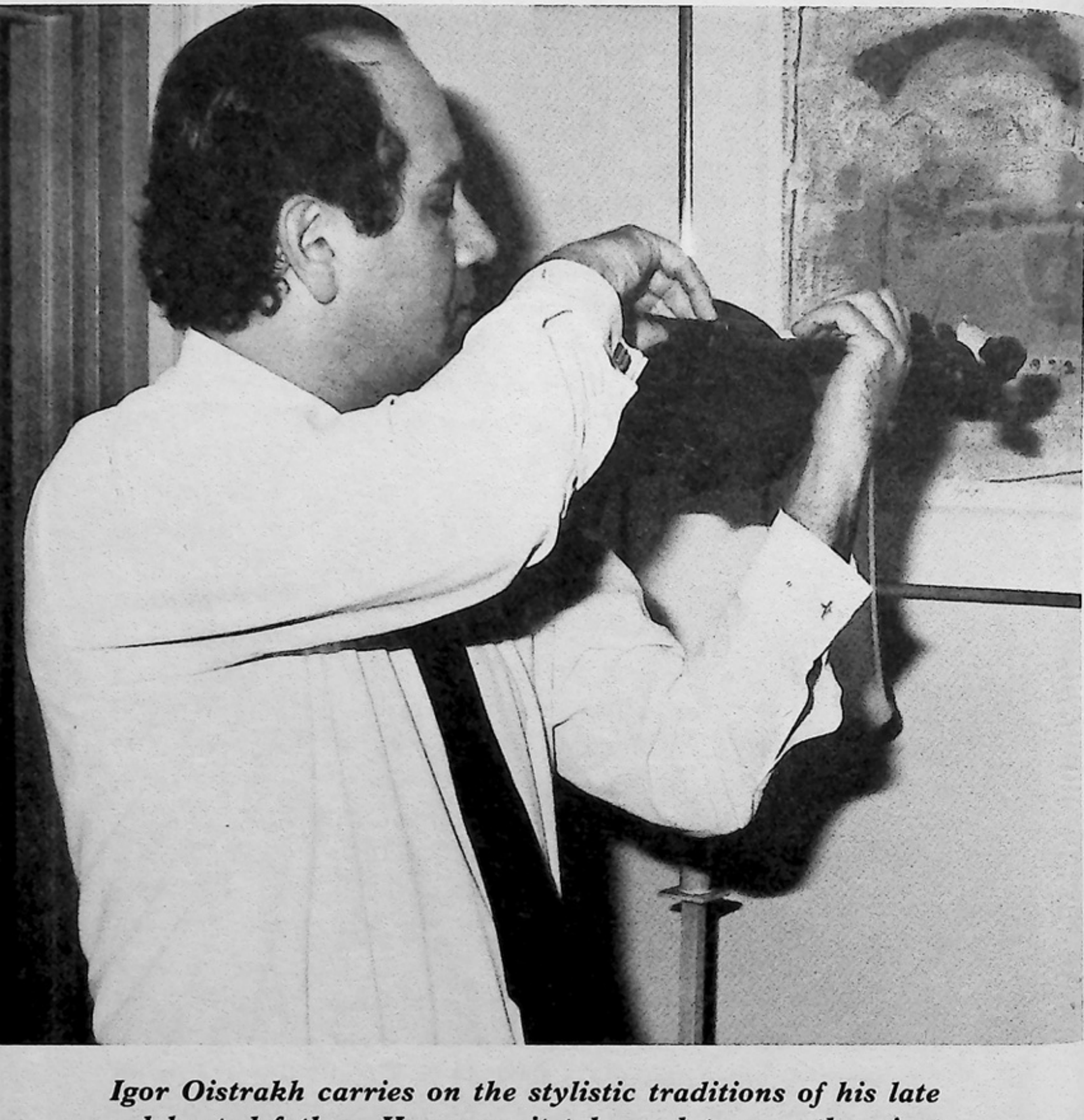
Among Igor's prime concerto recordings are Hindemith's thorny *Kammermusik No. 4*, with a final section of satanic hair-raising velocity, coupled with Prokofiev's Concerto No. 1, which may lack a dollop of 'mystery' in the opening section and high E-string filigree passages at the end of the first movement, but sports unusual finger and bow articulation, is dulcet in tone and satirically exhilarating in spirit. The Moscow Radio Symphony,

again under the authoritative baton of Rozhdestvensky, offers better sounding accompaniments than in the "French Music" disc (Melodiya-Angel). The Bartok Concerto No. 2, with the Moscow State Symphony under Rozhdestvensky, is a gutsy, idiomatic performance, though the over-all sound on a Russian disc released through Artia-Parliament Industries (1962) lacks the ultimate tonal brilliance; the Nikolai Rakov (1908 —) Violin Concerto, a blithe, songful, highly entertaining work of direct audience appeal (that deserves to be better known in the West), is endearingly played, though unmistakably recalling an earlier recording by David Oistrakh (National Philharminic Orchestra under Nikolai Rakov; released in the West by Bruno Hi-Fi Records). The opus itself reflects the influence of Prokofiev, Kabalevsky and Tchaikovsky; unprofound, but delightful.

One of the most artistically revealing discs of Igor Oistrakh is a Vanguard recording of performances originally made in 1954 at age 23. True, one can easily pinpoint many inflections analogous to those of his father, but this collection of shorter works provides an impressive overview of his essential talent. The Bach *Solo Sonata No. 1 in G-minor* has a positive romantic cast, but is ever respectful to the ethos of the music. The vibrato in the Adagio is properly chastened, the chords of the Fugue are firmly resonant and their melody notes meticulously articulated. His energetic drive is neatly alternated with passages of relaxation, and the episode is heightened by cogent climactic build-ups. The Siciliana has some initial tautness of tone and phrasing and some minor intonation imperfections, but is acceptable; the Presto is crisp, vigorous and dynamic.

The Vitali "Chaconne" is highly charged and projects much inner force. One can detect some 'hot-and-cold' vibrato aberrations and a prosaic melodic octave passage in the latter stages of the piece, but his tone is generally well-varied and beautiful, and the over-all interpretation is surely one of the few most edifying recorded versions. The Mozart-Kreisler "Rondo" is another exceptional performance. The approach may be a mite free-wheeling

Between the ages of 14 and 18, I worked on the Etudes of Ernst, Wieniawski and Saurét. Of course, I also worked on the entire scale system of Karl Flesch."



Igor Oistrakh carries on the stylistic traditions of his late celebrated father. However, it takes a lot more than just technique to make a great violinist, and if Igor keeps improving, he might very well fill in the void left by his father's early death.

compared to that preferred by those of academic persuasion, but all is facile, suave and tasteful, and the melodic themes sing uninhibitedly. (The latter two pieces have well-tempered piano accompaniments by A. Makarov, and together with the Bach were recorded in Paris.)

The Vieuxtemps "Tarantelle," a whirlwind tour-de-force, is tossed off with consummate attention to detail, and Wieniawski's "Scherzo-Tarantelle," with a radiant middle melodic segment, possibly ranks in the best half-dozen among the more than 50 recorded versions to date. Rounding out the disc is Kabalevsky's *Improvisation*, a worthy piece somewhat recalling Kreisler's *Recitative and Scherzo Caprice* but not at all imitative, with an attractive Russian-flavored bittersweet lyric theme and an exciting climax and an impassioned yet exquisitely-tinted performance of Szymanowski's *The Fountain of Arethusa*. The four latter pieces of this disc are sensitively partnered by I. Kollegorskaya. All were taken from the original Russian tapes. Some imported Russian tapes are known to have been taken from 'live' concerts, and thus have both the special spontaneity and minute imperfections of 'live' performances. None of the discs mentioned above, however, supplies this information.

The duo collaborations of Igor and David include masterful discs of Vivaldi Concertos, the Bach Double Concerto, Bach and Tartini Sonatas, the Mozart "Duo Concertante" (with David on viola) and violin duos, the Honegger "Sonatina," duos by Spohr, and the rip-roaring romp of Sarasate's "Navarra. " Apart from the Mozart "Duo Concertante" and the Bach Double Concerto, which enjoy several outstanding recordings, the peerless Oistrakh twosome has had scarcely a rival in the violin duo métier, though Perlman and Zukerman have recently made some splendid recording contributions in this neglected field.

Igor also proves himself a stalwart violist in a disc collaboration with violinist Viktor Pikaisen, in Mozart's "Duo Concertante." The technically impeccable interpretation is often muscular, where transparency would better suit the essence of the music, and the intensely vibrant, highly-charged violin sound and thrust tend to be more hyper-romantic than noble or elegant. But Igor's viola playing, which leans toward a 'treble' violinistic tonal timbre, is modulated and nuanced with much sensitivity, care and skill. And in a conducting stint, Igor elicits a silken reading of Mozart's *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik* that is neat, fluent and respectful of the music. (Both, on a single disc, are with the Solo Ensemble of the Moscow State Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra, ABC Westminster Gold Records).

In this continuing recessive era of great solo violinists cast in the heroic mold, it would seem that Igor Oistrakh, if he maintains his top violinistic form undistracted by other musical or non-musical commitments, should continue to heighten the esteem and reputation to which he is entitled by virtue of his exceptional attainments.

Igor Oistrakh, with his secretary, is very proud of his violin as he shows it to Samuel Applebaum and Paul Paradise.

On February 17, 1978, music critic Donal Henahan of The New York times wrote:

"Something shocking happened last night at the New York Philharmonic. Igor Oistrakh played an encore. Now, that might not even strike you as a cataclysmic event, since the encore is a rather common thing elsewhere in the musical world. But not at the Philharmonic, where concerts are expected to go off with the precision of space shots. People have trains to catch, and cars to ransom from garages, and miles to go before they sleep.

But Mr. Oistrakh, who was making his Philharmonic debut, took no heed to all that. At the conclusion of the Prokofiev Violin Concerto No. 1 in D. in which he was the soloist under the baton of Bernard Haitink, the Soviet musician walked out and threw off an unaccompanied showpiece, Ysaye's Balladè (Op. 27). He took the Philharmonic management entirely by surprise, and why not? Ancient Philharmonic watchers could not recall any similar incident since another individualist, Yehudi Menuhin, insisted on giving an encore after a concerto back in the late 1950's.

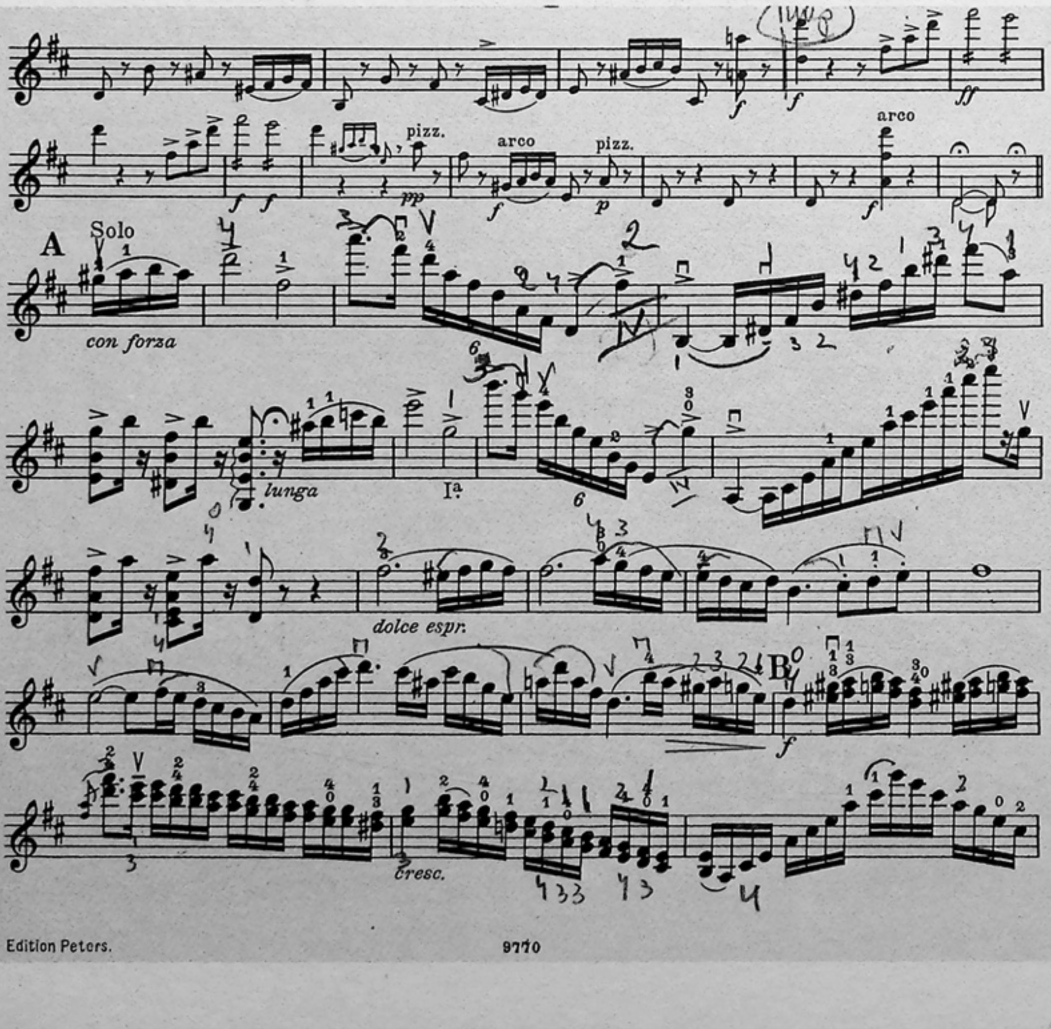
Mr. Oistrakh's blow for fiddling freedom seemed particularly surprising inasmuch as he has not struck this listener as the type to make revolutions. The talented son of the late David Oistrakh has spent a good part of his career trying to move out of the shadow of that towering artist. Perhaps he felt that now was the time to show a bit of mettle. Or did he just not know about that sanctified Philharmonic tradition?

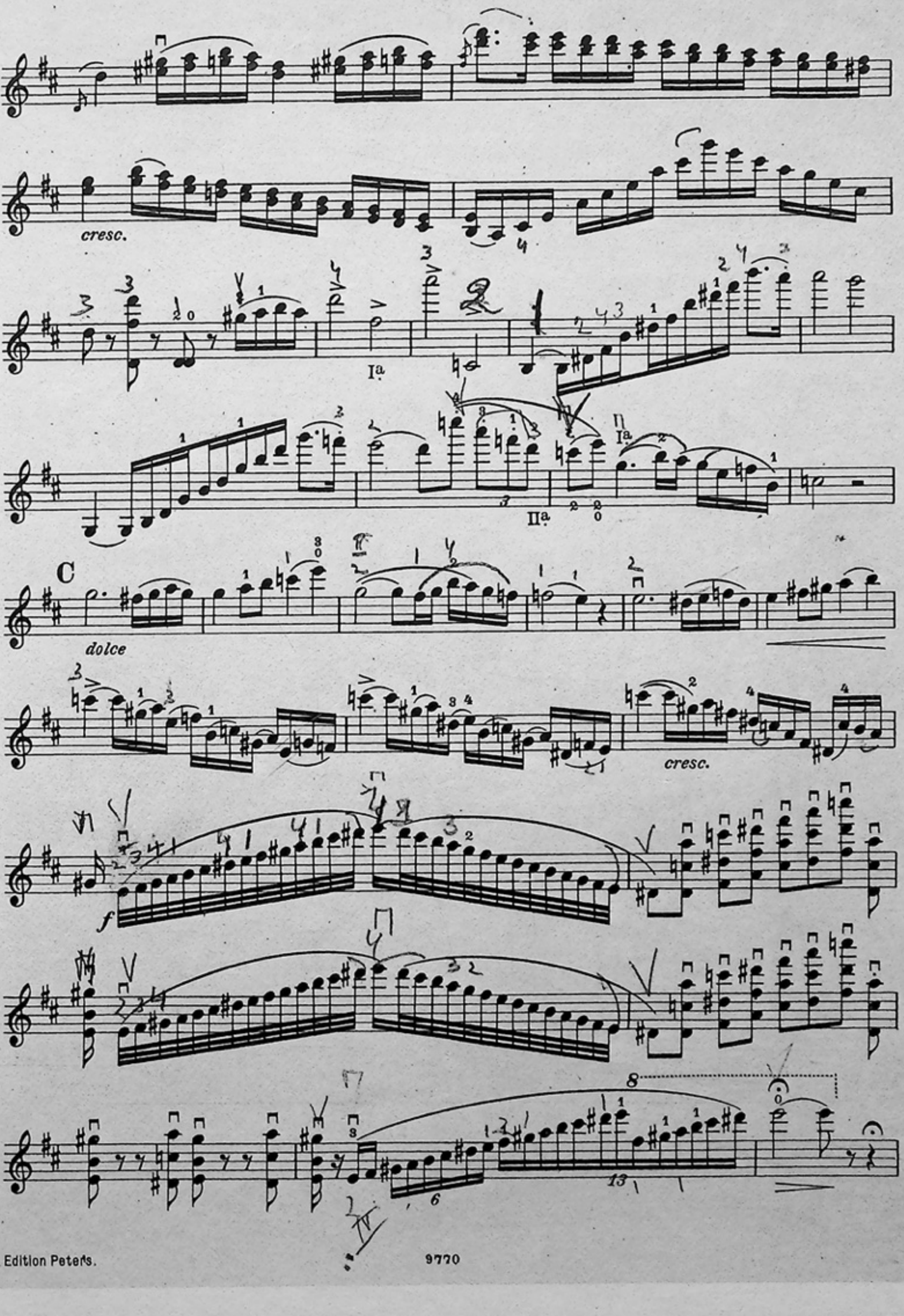
At any rate, Mr. Oistrakh's performance of the Ysaye was wondrous: incisive and pinpointed in its accuracy, and yet buttery of tone. The Prokofiev, although a more acerbic work, nevertheless sounded almost suave at times. Mr. Oistrakh's bow drew apparently unbroken lines of pleasing sound from a violin of remarkable richness and penetration.

This ability to please with ripe sonority, however, did not prevent the soloist from turning the Scherzo into an exhibition of agility and rhythmic brio. Without trying to compare him to his illustrious father, it must be said that he has rounded into a splendid violinist and a not inconsiderable artist."

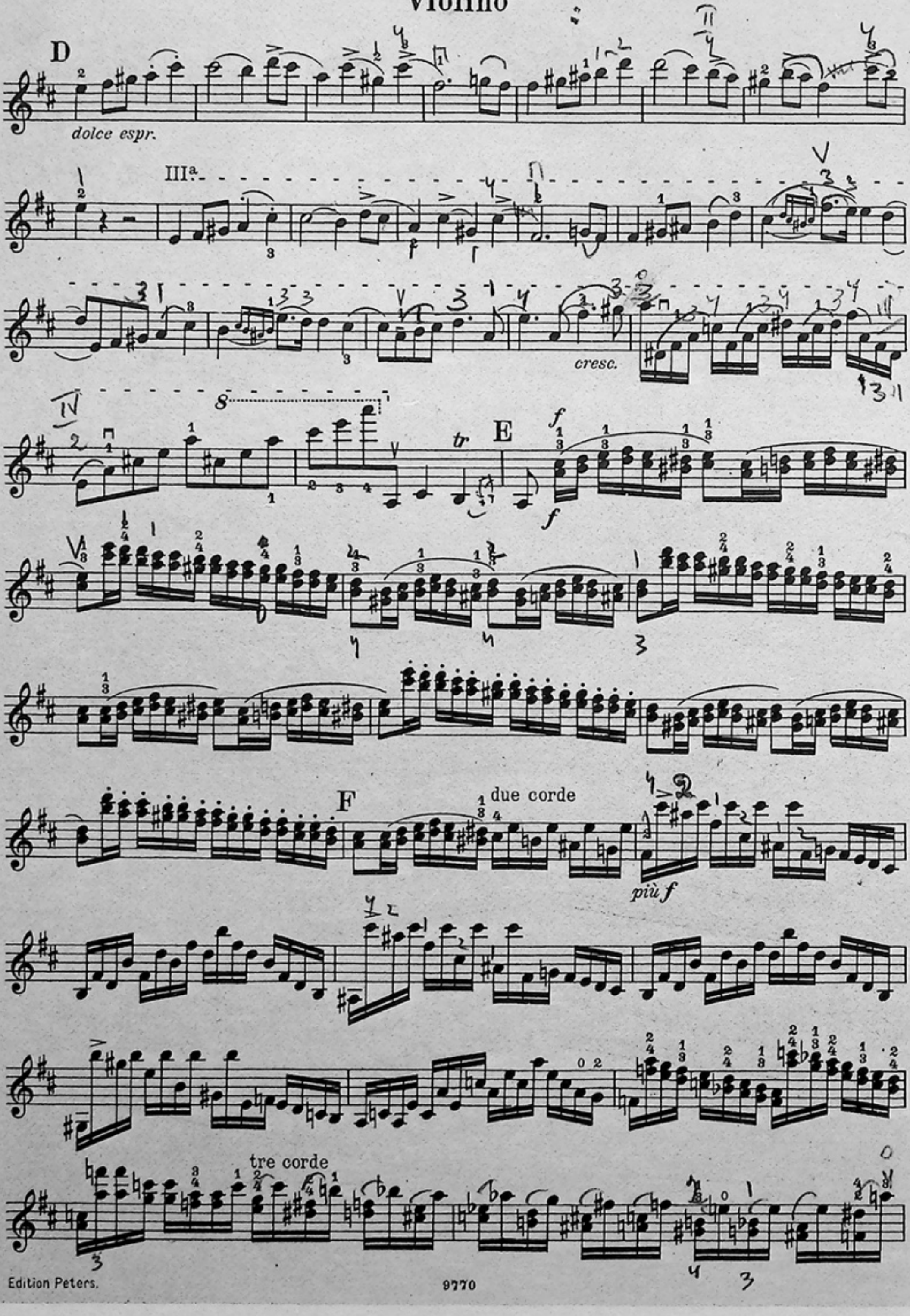
THE FIRST VIOLIN CONCERTO OF N. PAGANINI AS INTERPRETED BY IGOR OISTRAKH

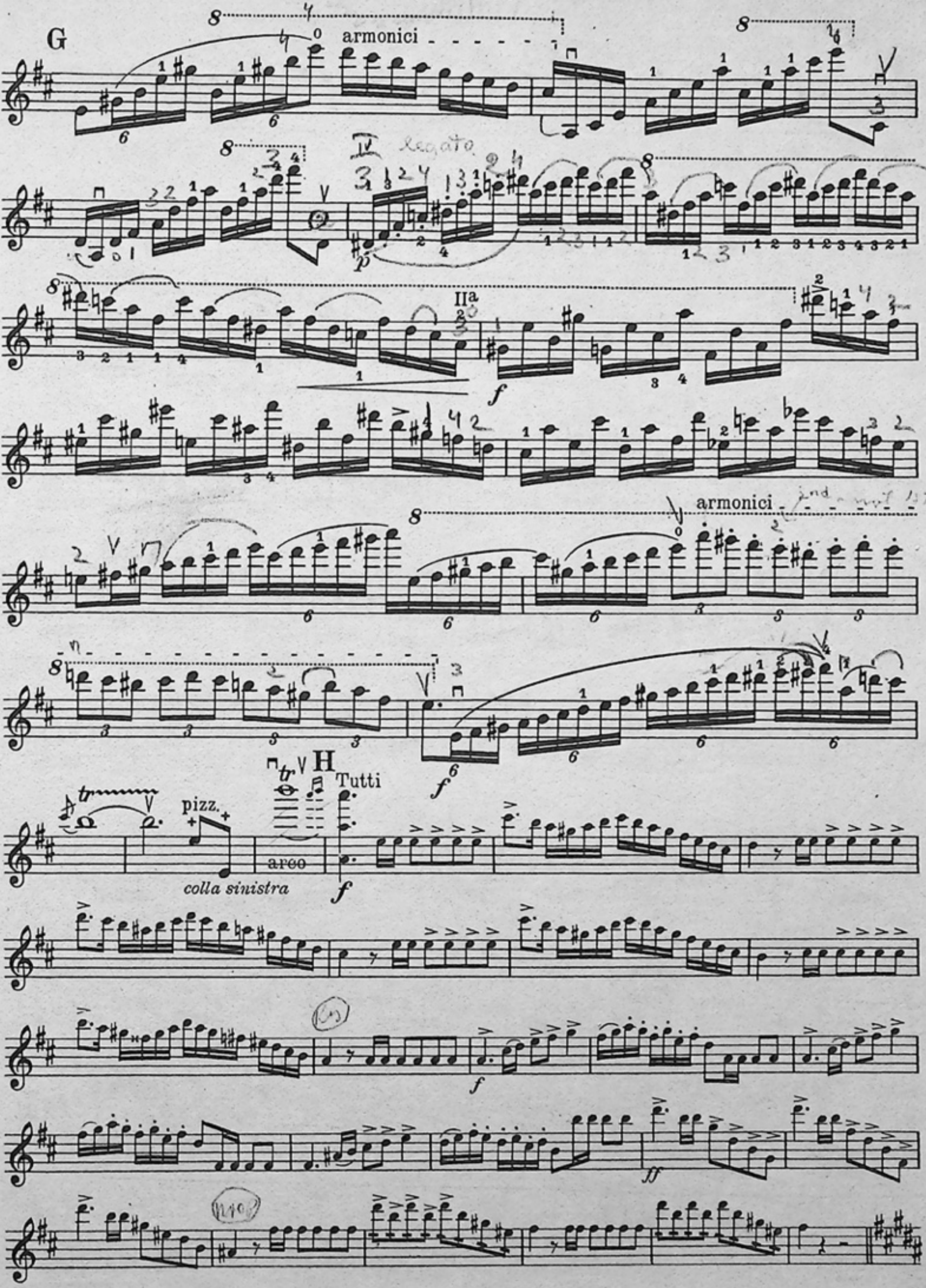
During our meeting with Igor Oistrakh in New York, we went over his fingering and phrasing of the Paganini First Violin Concerto. We were very impressed with his interpretation, especially as he illustrated various preferences with his violin during the discussion. Maestro Oistrakh very graciously loaned us his music so we could photograph it and present it here for more thorough study and analysis. The music speaks for itself so there is little need to comment on the fingerings and changes offered by Maestro Oistrakh.



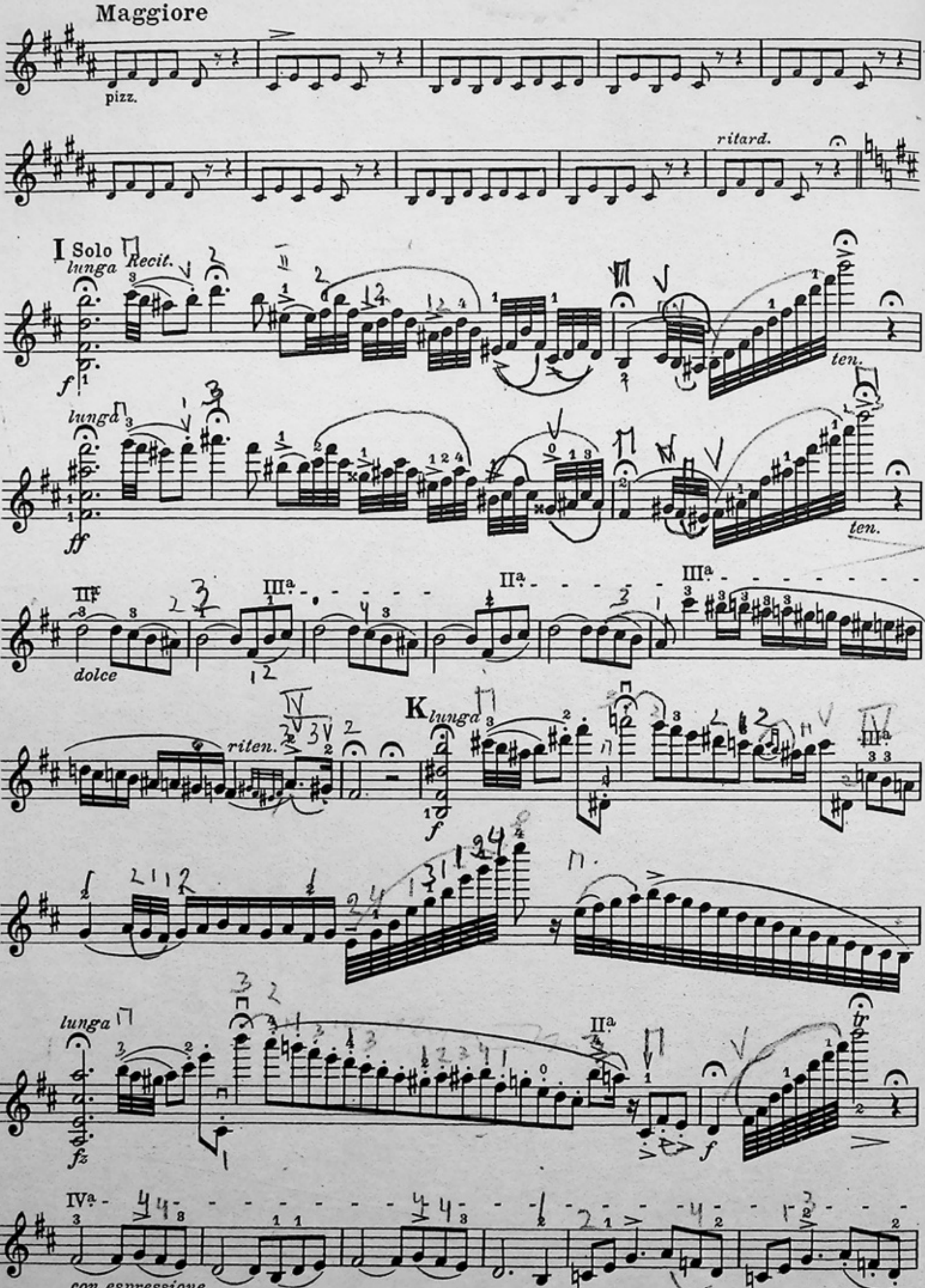

cresc.
Ia
IIa
C
dolce
cresc.
f
8

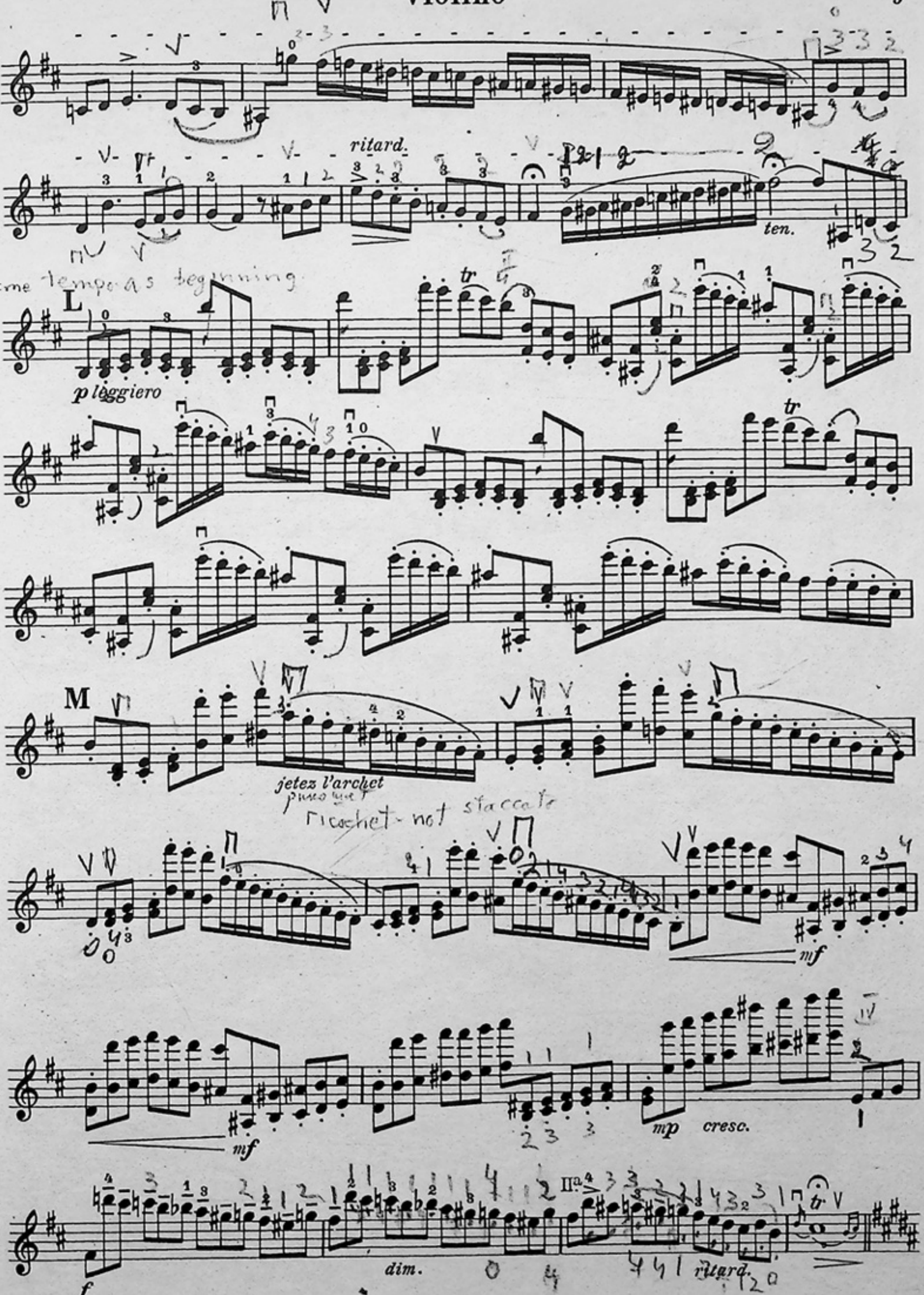
Violino



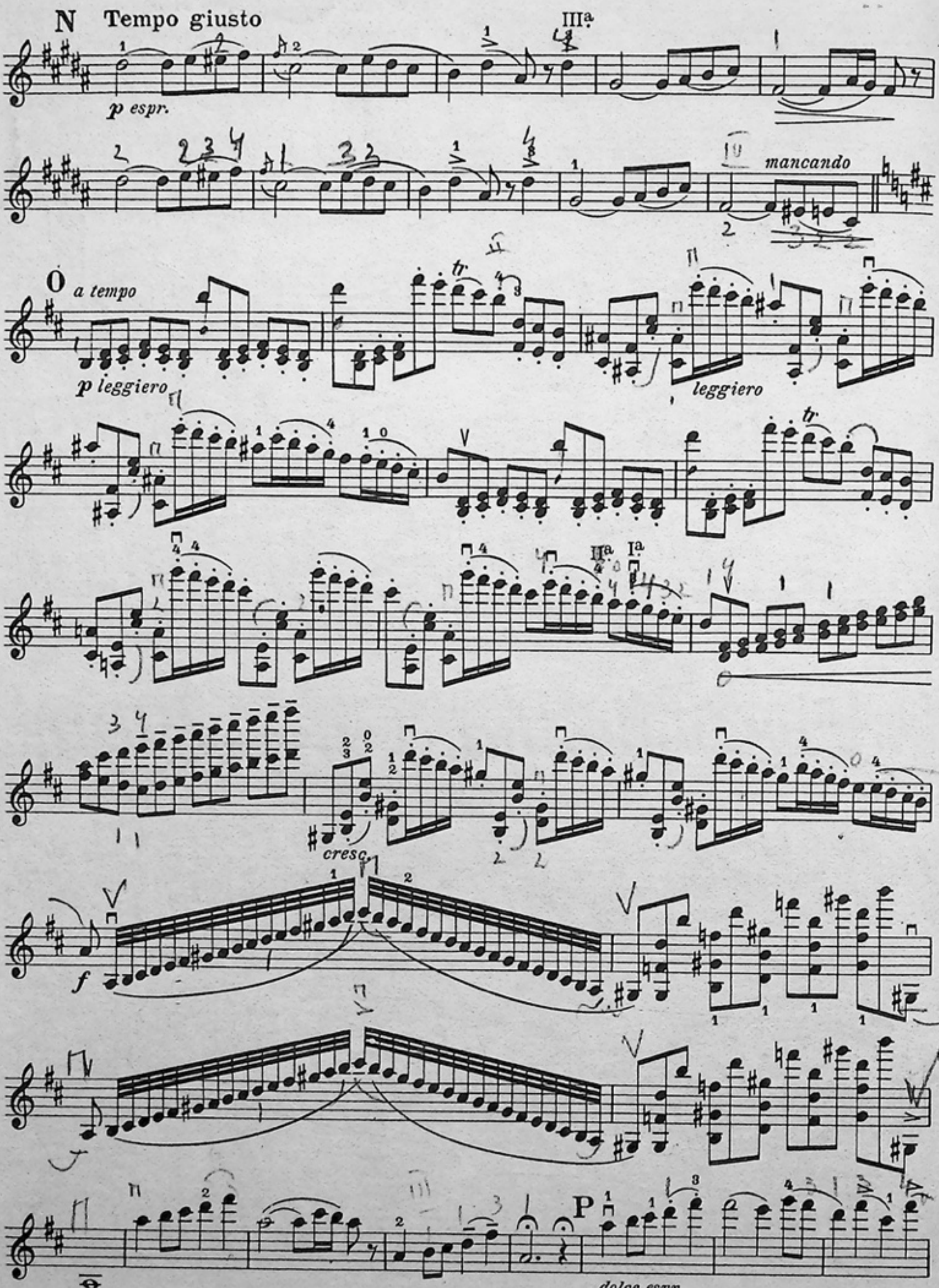

G
8
armonici
legato
IIa
p
f
armonici
H
Tutti
tr
pizz.
arco
colla sinistra
ff

Violino

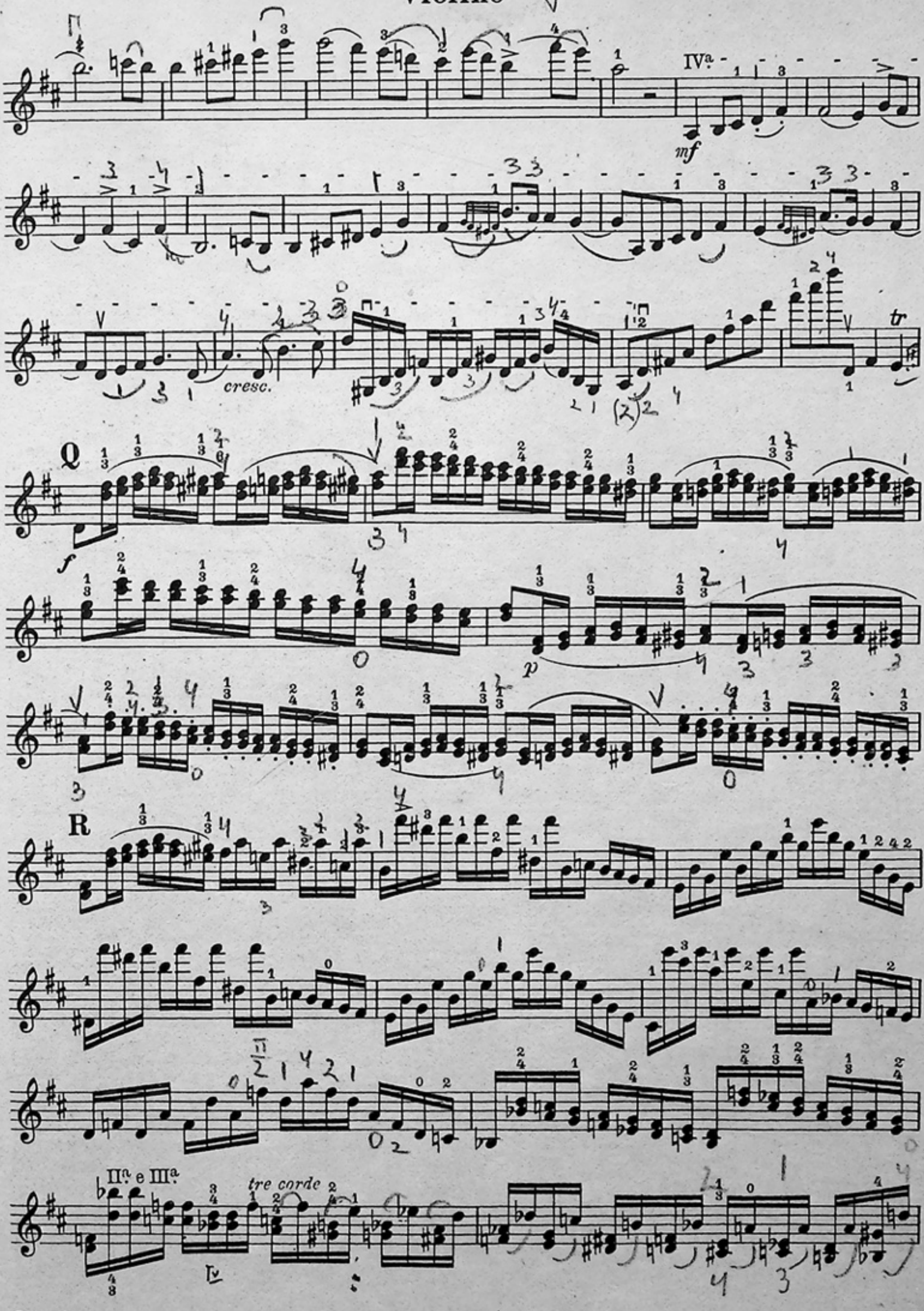

Maggiore
pizz.
ritard.
I Solo
lunga
Recit.
f
ten.
lunga
ff
ten.
III^a
II^a
III^a
dolce
riten.
K lunga
f
III^a
lunga
II^a
fz
f
tr
IV^a
con espressione

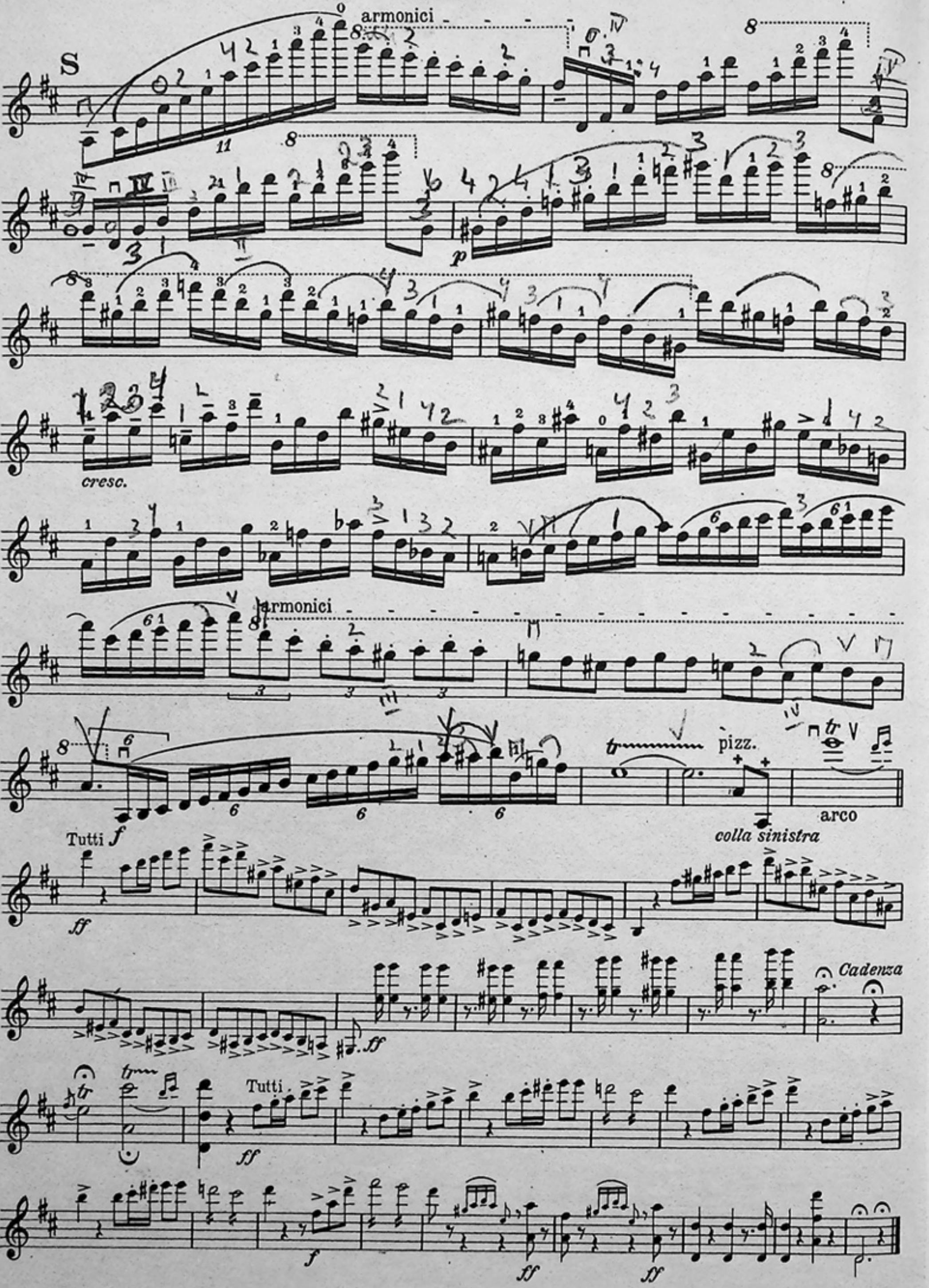

ritard.
ten.
same tempo as beginning
L
p leggiero
tr
M
jetez l'archet
ricochet - not staccato
mf
mp
cresc.
f
dim.
ritard.

Violino

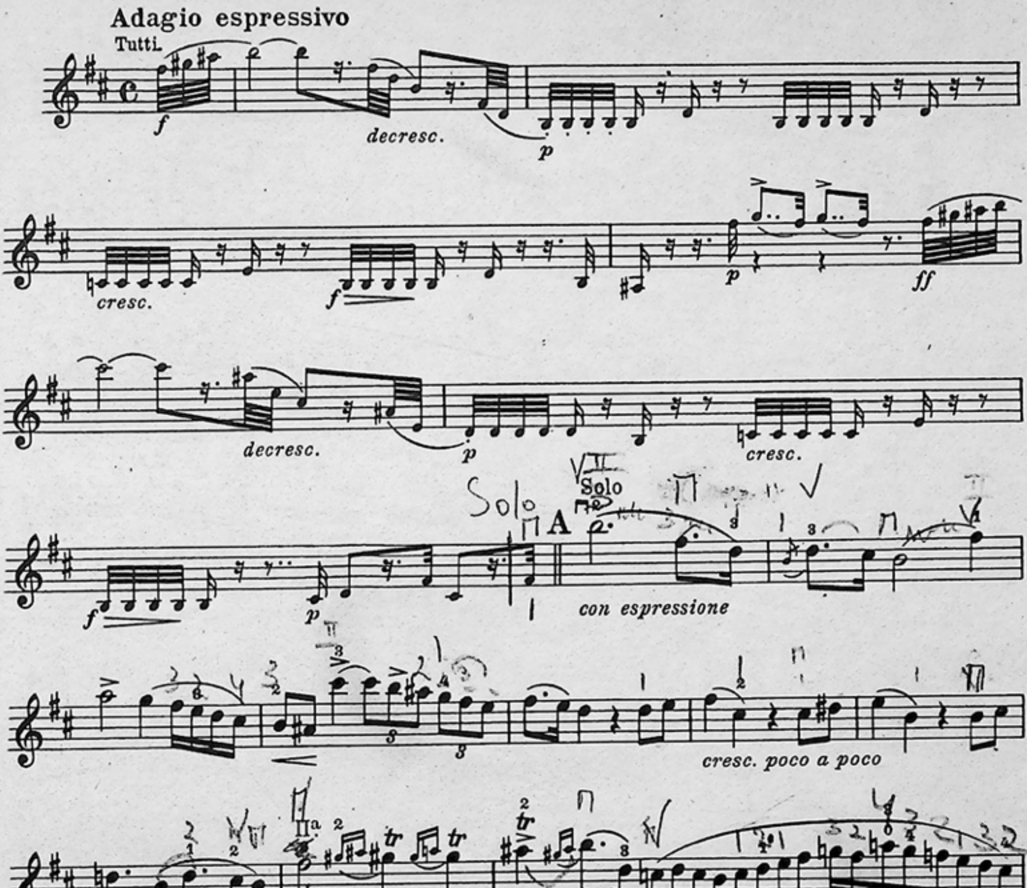

N
Tempo giusto
p espr.
IIIa.
mancando
O
a tempo
p leggiero
leggiero
IIa
Ia
cresc.
f
fz
P
dolce espr.

Violino

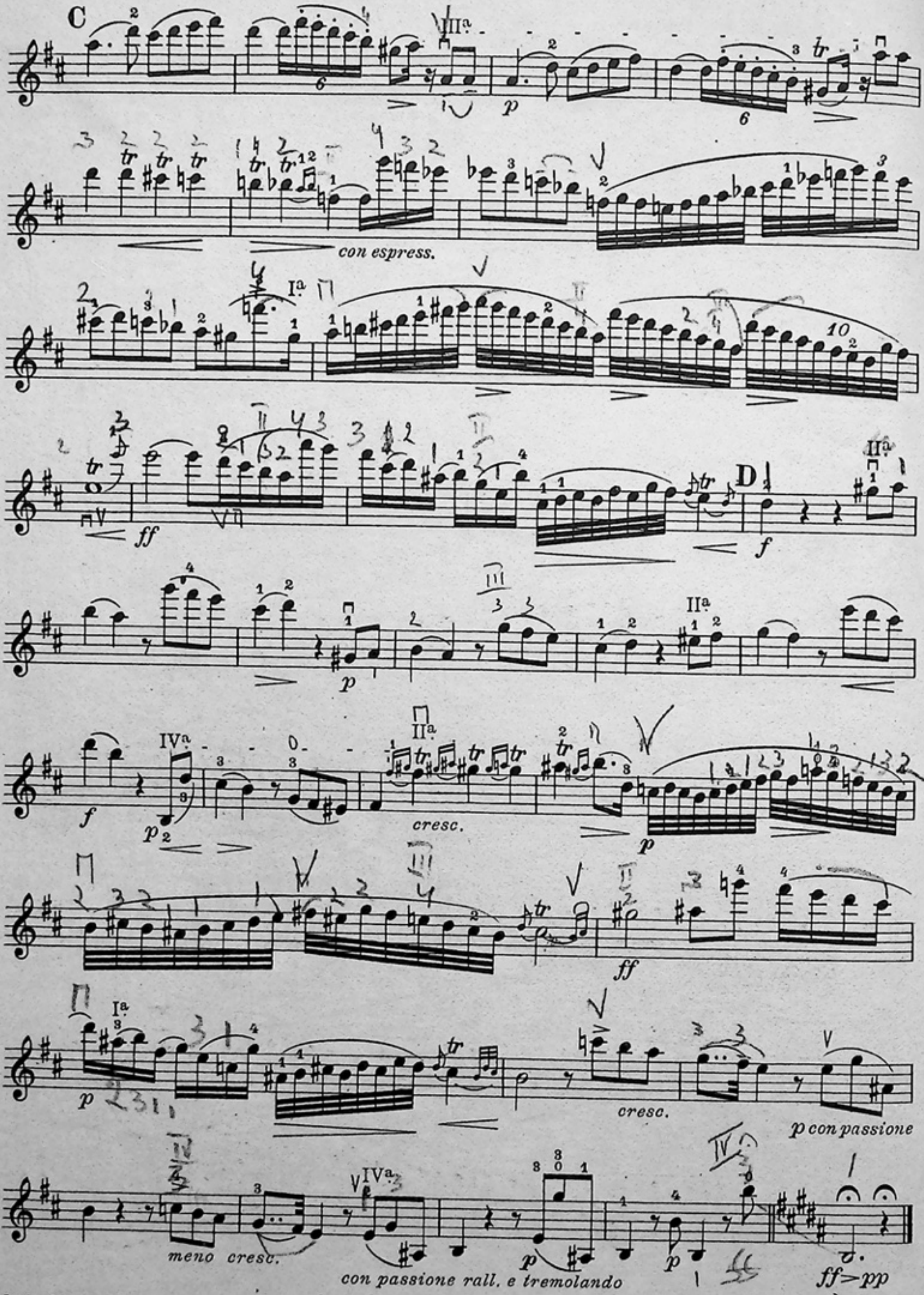



S
armonici
8
cresc.
p
armonici
pizz.
arco
colla sinistra
Tutti
f
ff
Cadenza
Tutti
ff
f
ff
ff

Violino


Adagio espressivo
Tutti.
f
decresc.
p
cresc.
f
p
ff
decresc.
p
cresc.
f
p
Solo
Solo
A
con espressione
cresc. poco a poco
IIa
poco cresc.
dimin.
p
B
ff
IVa
cresc.
IIa
cresc.
f
cresc.
cresc.
ff
decresc.
dolce

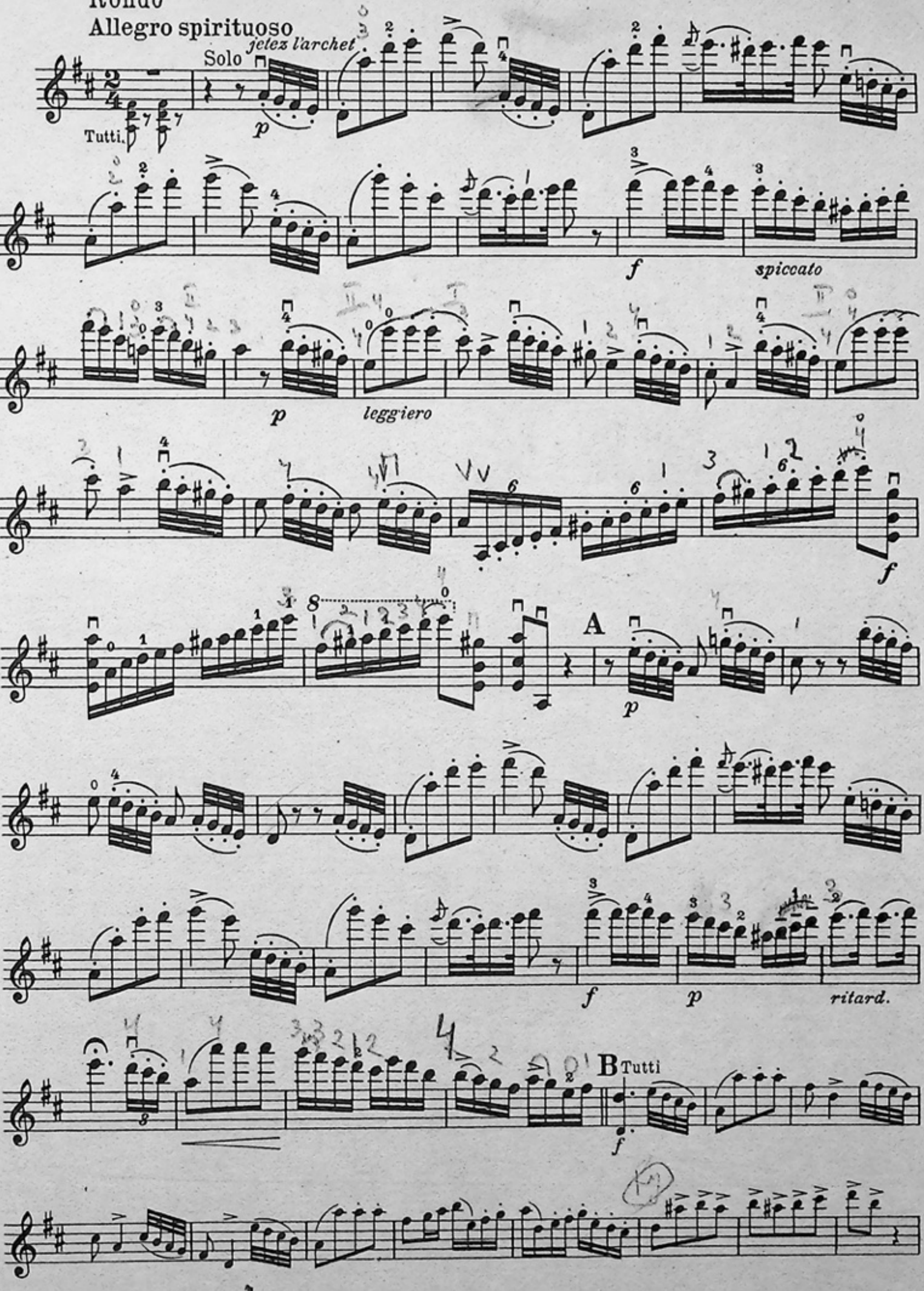
Violino

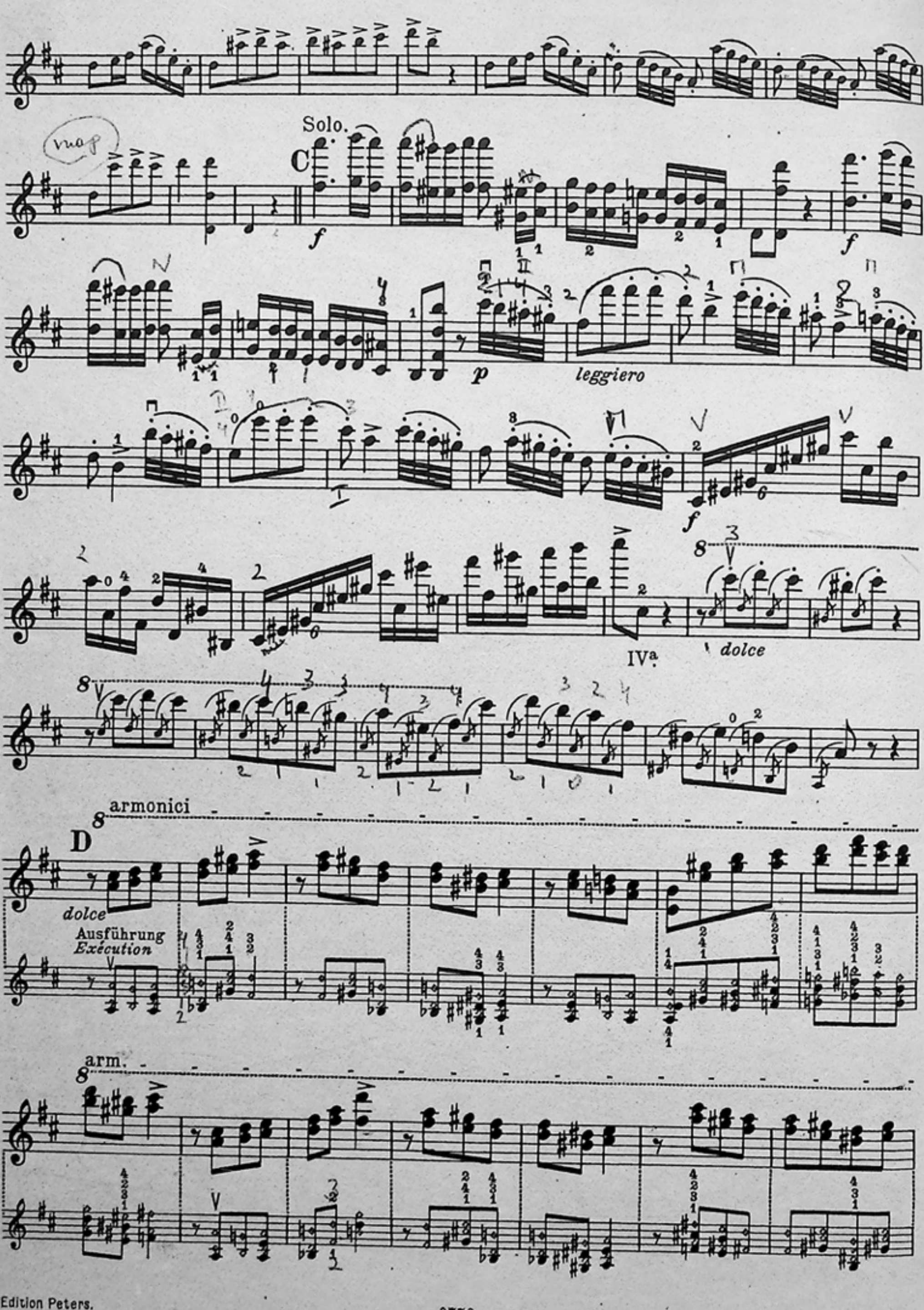

C
IIIa
p
con espress.
Ia
ff
D
f
p
IIa
IVa
p
cresc.
p
ff
Ia
p
cresc.
p con passione
meno cresc.
IVa
p
p
con passione rall. e tremolando
ff>pp

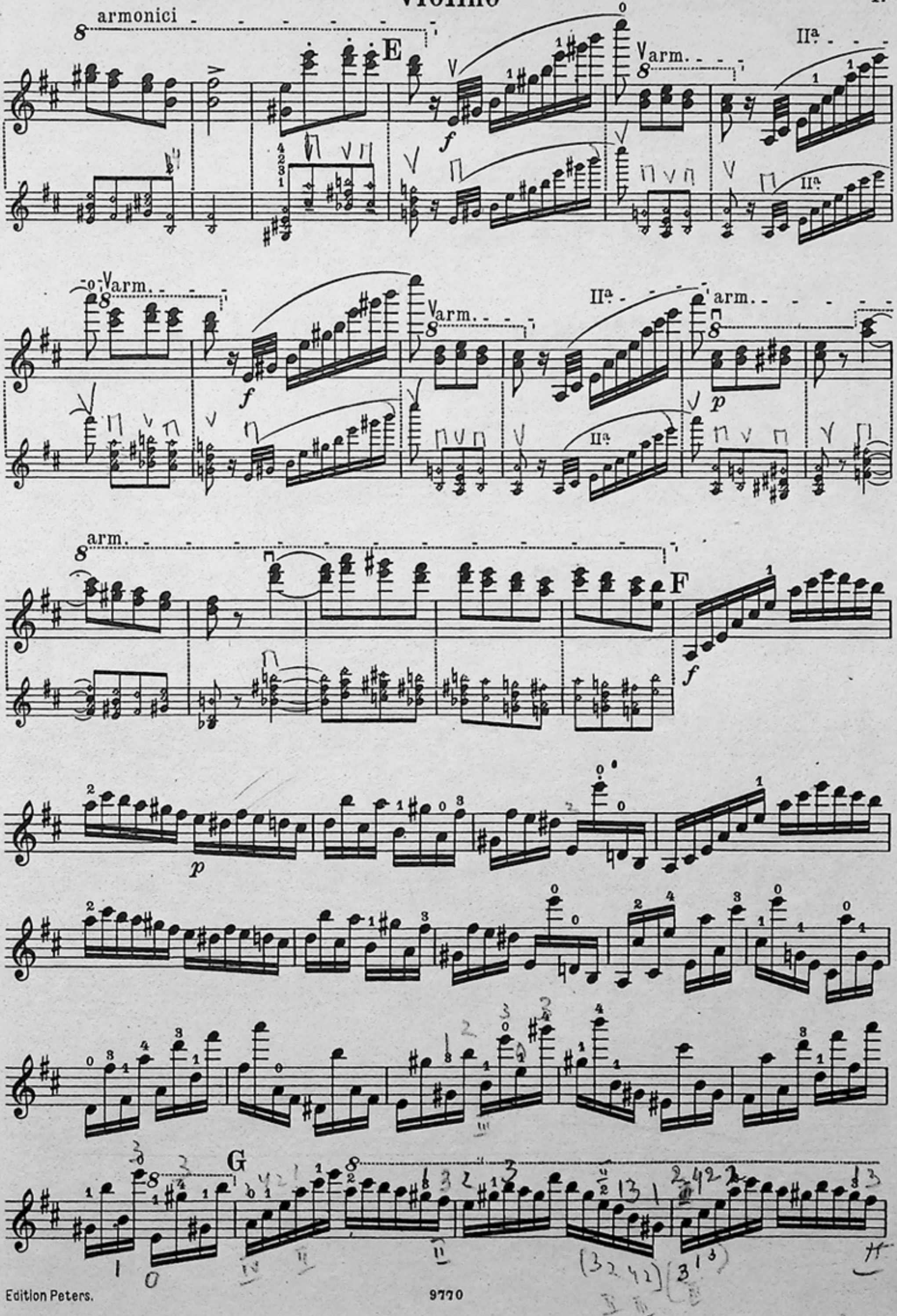
Violino

Rondo

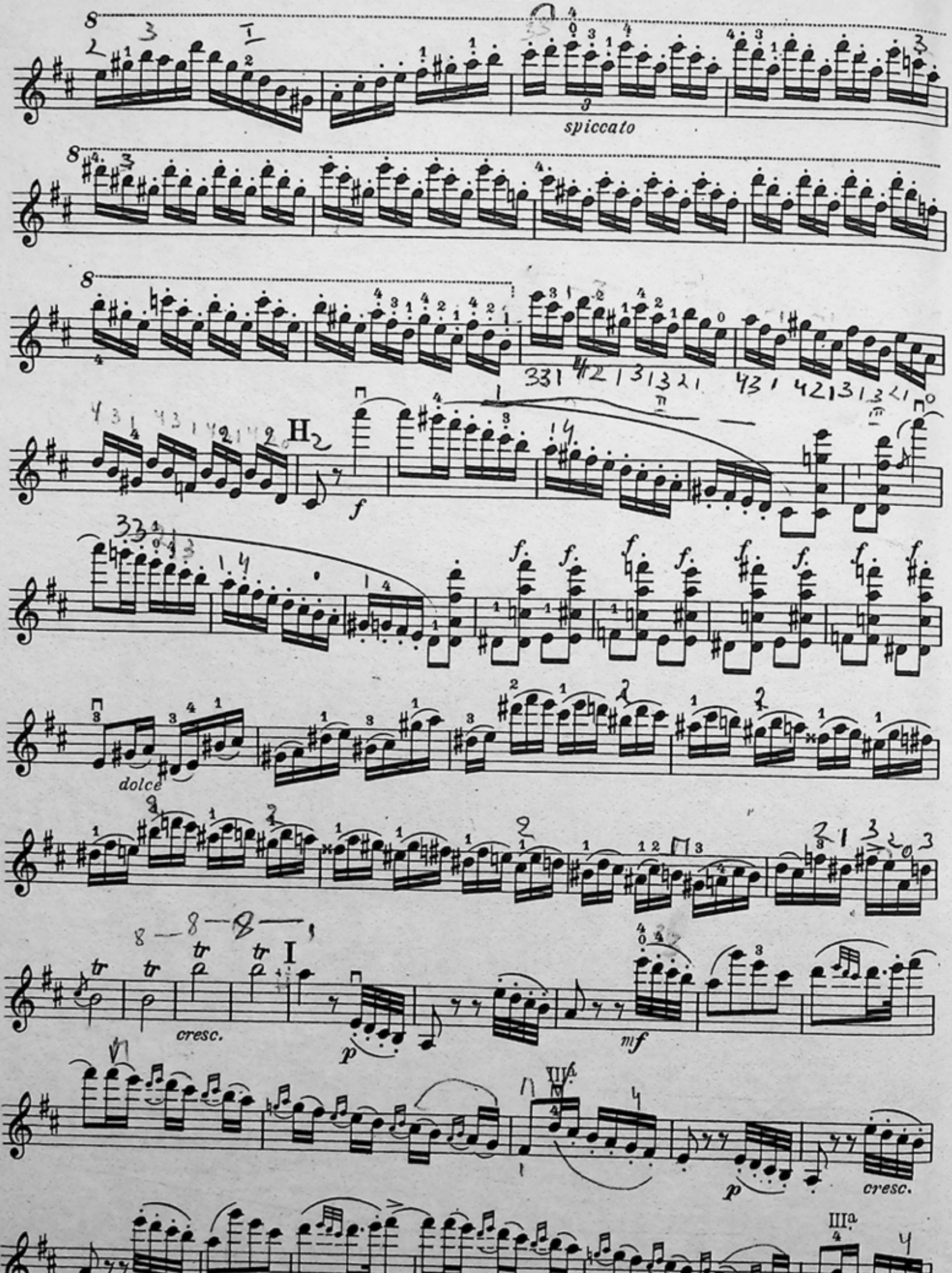
Allegro spirituoso

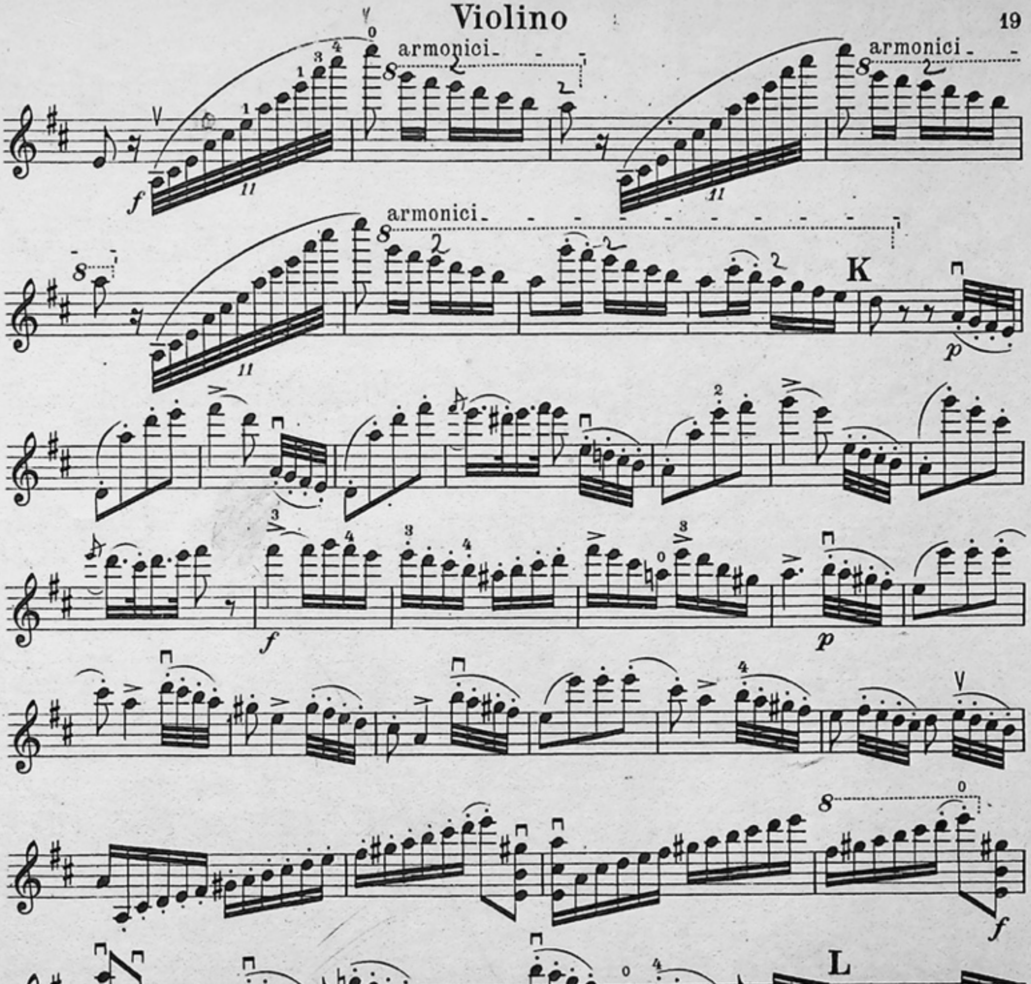


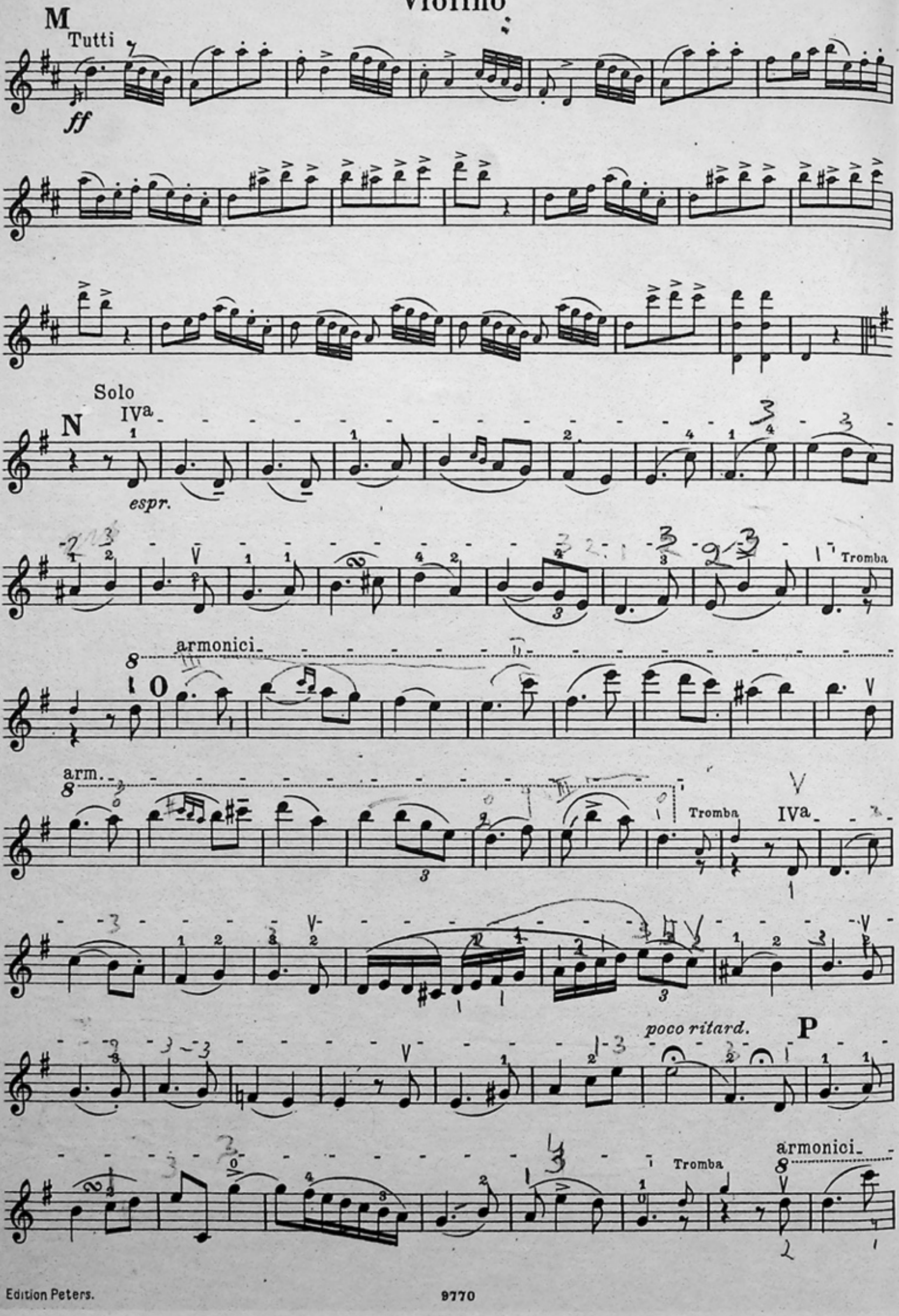

Solo.
C
f
p
leggiero
f
IVa.
dolce
armonici
D
dolce
Ausführung
Exécution
arm.

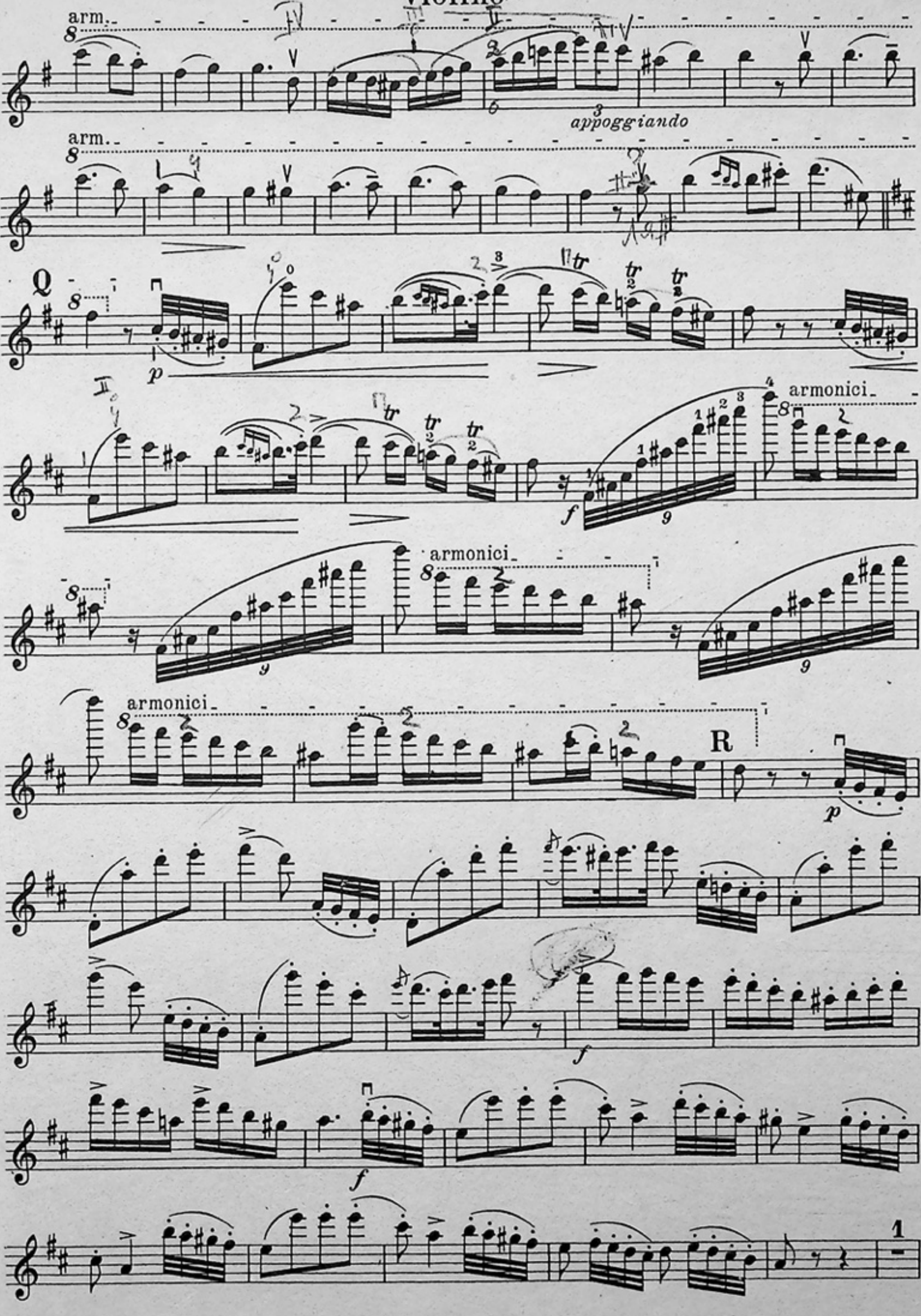

armonici
8
E
V arm.
IIa
f
arm.
p
F
G
Ia

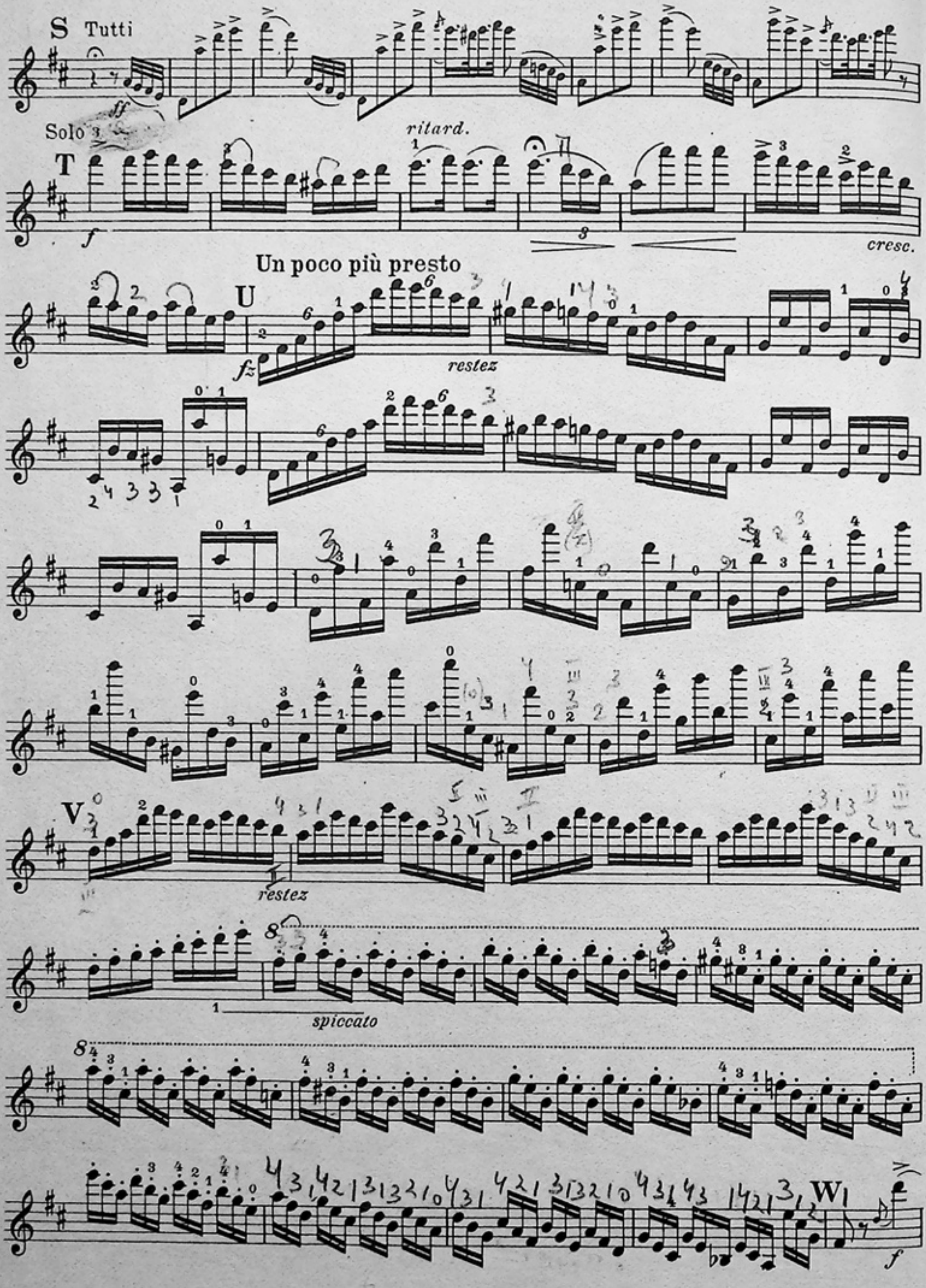
Violino

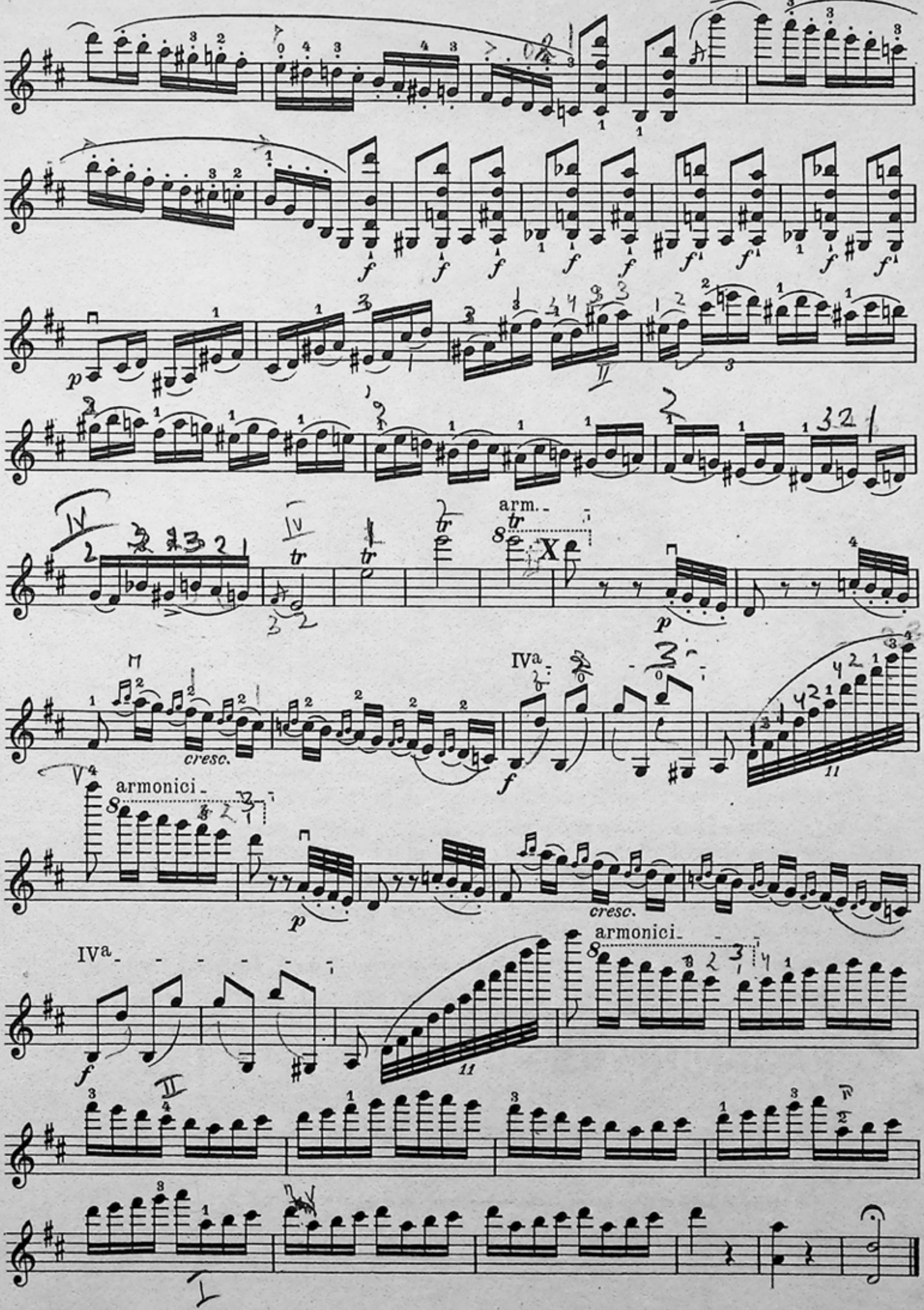



armonici
armonici
armonici
K
L
f
p
f
p
p leggiero
f
mf rit.
3
11
11
11


M
Tutti
ff
Solo
N
IVa
espr.
Tromba
armonici
O
arm.
Tromba
IVa
poco ritard.
P
Tromba
armonici


arm.
appoggiando
arm.
Q
p
armonici
f
armonici
armonici
R
p
f
f
1


S
Tutti
ff
Solo
T
f
ritard.
cresc.
Un poco più presto
U
fz
restez
V
restez
spiccato
W
f


f
p
arm.
tr
IVa
cresc.
armonici
11
8

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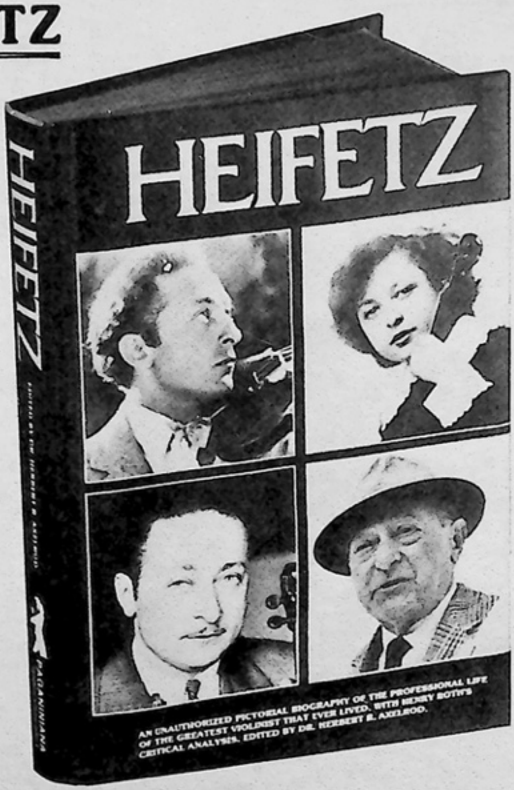
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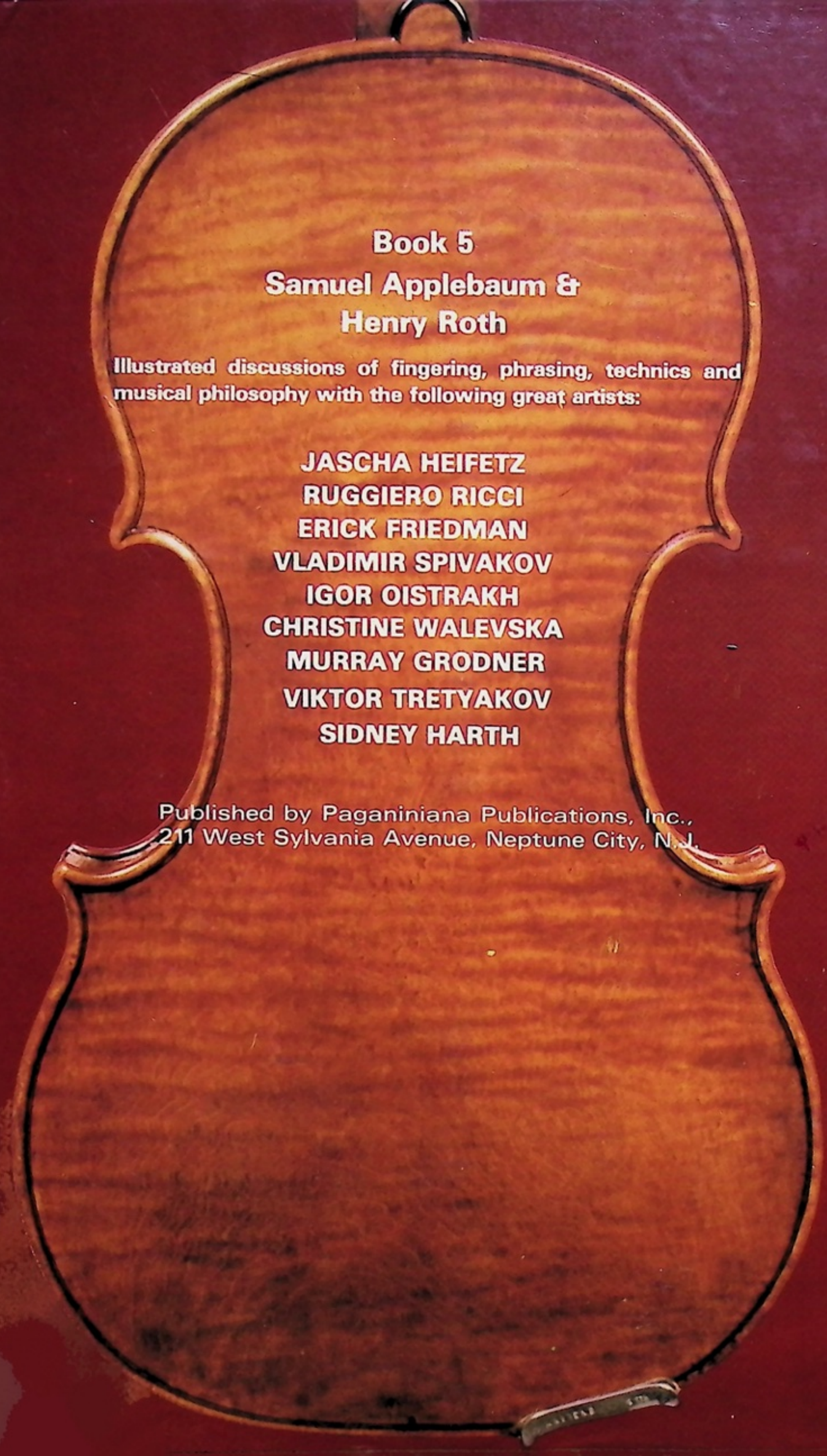

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ISBN 0-87666-449-4
Z-11